



YOSHITOSHI

One Hundred Views of The Moon

RONINGALLERY

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A World Between

*“Even Daoist magicians who materialized moonbeams from their pockets were, I hear, obliged to use several hundred strands of rope. Now Yoshitoshi, a resident of Asakusa in Kokai, has, with absolute freedom, conjured up images of the moon, ancient and modern, from the hairs of his brush...”*¹

—Keika, 1885.²

Yoshitoshi works magic through ink and paper in the series *One Hundred Views of the Moon* (*Tsuki Hyakushi*, 1885-1892). Regarded as one of the great masterpieces of ukiyo-e, this series offers not only creative, compositional, and technical brilliance, but also unfettered passion. Yoshitoshi draws his viewer into a mysterious realm, blurring the boundaries between reality and illusion. From tales of vengeful ghosts and legendary heroes to poetic musings and otherworldly encounters, he threads together poetry, folklore, literature, and history beneath the light of the moon. This shimmering ode to centuries of Japanese culture reinvigorated the tales of the past for a nation shaping its future.

While often characterized as the “last” master of ukiyo-e—a final burst of brilliance—Yoshitoshi marks not the end of an art form, but an evolution. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892) worked during an era of dramatic cultural and economic transformation in Japan. Following Commodore Perry’s 1853 arrival in Edo Bay, an anxiety seeped into the soil, spawning the country’s rapid modernization along the Western imperial model under the restored rule of the emperor. As the “floating world” of Edo became the modern metropolis of Tokyo, Yoshitoshi captured this changing world through a familiar medium. Tinged with uncertainties that characterized this era, Yoshitoshi’s woodblock prints bridged Japan’s rich cultural past and emerging modern identity through the fantastic, the historical, and the haunting.

Completed in his final decade, *One Hundred Views of the Moon* revels in Yoshitoshi’s considerable originality and imagination. As he preserves the stories and styles of ukiyo-e in his designs,



Toshikage. *Memorial Portrait of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi*. 1892. Woodblock print. 14" x 9.5."

1. John Stevenson, *Yoshitoshi's One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* (San Francisco Graphic Society, 1992), 69.

2. Excerpt from the introduction to Akiyama Buemon's album of *One Hundred Views of the Moon*, published in 1892. Stevenson, *ibid.*

their execution celebrates the skill of the carver and printer, with most impressions bearing luxurious printing techniques such as embossing, metallic pigments, and burnishing. With a sensitivity to time, place, and subject, Yoshitoshi delves into a spectrum of emotion, exploring the many facets of human nature as they unfold beneath the night sky.

A CHILD OF EDO

In the mid-19th century, Edo, Japan's largest city and cultural capital, was home to the floating world (*ukiyo*). Born of the merchant class, this pleasure-focused realm revolved around the courtesans of the Yoshiwara and the stars of the kabuki theater. Ukiyo-e, or "pictures of the floating world," captured this urban popular culture through the woodblock print medium. Ever adapting to the public taste, these prints were affordable works of art. As Kunisada's actor portraits fed theatrical fandom and Kuniyoshi's warrior prints sparked imaginations, Hiroshige and Hokusai answered a national wanderlust through their iconic landscape series. While the product of Edo society, ukiyo-e equally shaped the development of this culture by promoting its humor, beauty, fashions, and heroes.

Born on April 30th, 1839 as Owariya Yonejiro, Yoshitoshi was a true *edokko*, or "child of Edo." Though his father originally belonged to the merchant class, he elevated the family rank by buying his way into the family of the samurai Yoshioka Hyobu.³ Some scholars suggest that Yoshitoshi was the lovechild of his father's mistress. When his father took a new mistress, Yoshitoshi left his family home to live with his uncle, a pharmacist who had recently lost his own son.⁴ Though little is known of Yoshitoshi's early life, he likely began his education at a *terakoya* (temple school). Here he learned to read and write, and perhaps, first encountered the historical tales and literary classics that inspired him throughout his life.

At the age of 11 Yoshitoshi began his artistic training in the studio of Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1798-1861), a leading ukiyo-e artist of the day. Kuniyoshi, the reigning master of all subjects fierce and fantastic, developed a close relationship with his pupil and gave him the *go* (artist's name) Yoshitoshi. Under Kuniyoshi's tutelage,

Yoshitoshi studied through both copying his master's designs and drawing from life, an uncommon practice in the mid-19th century. Kuniyoshi admired his pupil's enthusiasm and allowed Yoshitoshi to study his collection of foreign prints and engravings.⁵ Yoshitoshi published his first print to modest success in 1853, a triptych depicting a 12th-century naval battle at Dannoura between the Taira and Minamoto clans. That same year, the unfamiliar sails of Commodore Matthew Perry's "black ships" arrived in Edo Bay.

CHANGING TIDES

Bearing President Millard Fillmore's invitation to establish trade and diplomatic relations with the United States, Commodore Perry left Japan with his demands unmet and a promise to return within a year's time. Wary of the shifting tone of the American requests and the Western world's propensity for gunboat diplomacy, the waning Tokugawa Shogunate decided to engage in foreign trade upon Perry's return in 1854. Resentment stirred among the aristocratic and samurai classes as Japan ended over 200 years of isolation. Social unrest spread throughout the country as Japan extended its trading partnerships to England, France, Russia and the Netherlands. As unfamiliar goods and foreign people arrived in Japan, ukiyo-e artists fed a public curiosity about these new arrivals. Named for the booming international port just outside Edo, *Yokohama-e* (Yokohama pictures) circulated first impressions of the foreigners that poured into Japan in the 1850s and early 1860s. At this time, Yoshitoshi primarily explored kabuki subjects and historical scenes, observing the changing world around him and imagining foreign shores.

As Yoshitoshi expanded his oeuvre, ukiyo-e felt the influence of the modern era through subjects and materials. Artists incorporated aniline dyes into their prints, opening a whole new world of vivid color. Although historically many scholars cited the opening of Japan for a perceived decline in ukiyo-e, an incredible creativity rose from the tumult of this transition. Yoshitoshi's printers learned to use these colors with subtlety and skill. In 1861, Kuniyoshi passed away, leaving the 22-year-old Yoshitoshi without a mentor, a teacher, or

3. A common practice at this point in time.

4. Eric van den Ing and Robert Schaap, *Beauty and Violence: Japanese Prints by Yoshitoshi, 1839-1892*. (Netherlands: Havilland Press, 1992), 9.

5. *ibid.*

connections to a publisher. The death of his teacher dealt a heavy blow to the young artist. Though he struggled to make ends meet, he began to develop his personal style. Around this time, he began a life-long friendship with two stars of the kabuki stage, Ichikawa Danjuro IX and Onoe Kikugoro V. Their friendship influenced Yoshitoshi's prints, resulting in unmatched portraits of the actors and growing public interest in the young artist.

The year 1863 was significant for Yoshitoshi both personally and professionally. His father passed away, followed by his first daughter, born of an anonymous mistress. Amid these tragedies, his professional reputation began to bloom. He began to sign his works "Tsukioka Yoshitoshi," taking his uncle's surname and contributed three designs to the series *53 Stations of the Tokaido* alongside artists such as Utagawa Kunisada, Utagawa Hiroshige II, and Kawanabe Kyosai. That same year he received a commission to paint a thirty-foot long curtain in Kofu, and attracted his first student, Toshikage (act. c. 1868-1892). Over the following years, Yoshitoshi received numerous serial commissions such as the *One Hundred Tales of China and Japan* (1865). In 1867, a government committee selected Yoshitoshi for a group commission of two painted albums to be displayed at the Paris Exposition Universelle. As these albums were intended to represent the leading ukiyo-e artists of the day to an international audience, Yoshitoshi's inclusion in this project speaks to his success. However, despite his burgeoning reputation, he remained poor as he continued to explore historical subjects with an increasingly violent focus.

A BLOODY TRANSITION

As political instability ensued in the final years of the Edo period, Yoshitoshi entered his "bloody" years. Marked by graphic violence and extravagant brutality, Yoshitoshi produced his most shocking prints between 1866 and 1868. In the notorious series *28 Murders with Verse* (1866-1867), Yoshitoshi collaborated with Utagawa Yoshiiku (1833-1904), another former student of Kuniyoshi, to depict terrifying images and acts of human cruelty. Printers mixed glue and alum with red ink to evoke congealed blood and many of the works were explicitly violent.⁶ Yoshitoshi became notorious

for his graphic designs both in Japan and abroad. These subjects reveal both a horror and fascination in these acts of violence. John Stevenson suggests that they provided a form of catharsis, an effort to exorcise the real-life terror and cruelty of turn-of-the century Japan through the atrocities of the past.⁷ Whether this hypothesis rang true or not, the economic success of these prints suggests that such imagery resonated with the audiences of the era. In the wake of this success, Yoshitoshi's output slowed to a halt towards the end of the decade. Beyond the page, reality proved similarly bleak.

Following crop failures, rice shortages plagued Japan and riots ensued. Amid economic decline and hyper-inflation, the country became increasingly divided between support for the rule of the shogun and for a new government under the emperor. The conflict culminated in 1868 with the removal of the shogun and restoration of imperial rule under the young Emperor Meiji. Though the shogun cooperated in this power shift, two thousand samurai, known as the Shogatai, or "The Clear and Righteous Brigade," gathered in Ueno. When the peace talk concluded, they felt betrayed by the shogun and incited a battle with the imperial troops. Whether or not Yoshitoshi witnessed the defeat of the old order firsthand, the violence of his work echoed the carnage of the battlefield.⁸

Following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, social, economic, and political change progressed at a stunning speed. From railroads and woven carpets, to fashion and colonial aspirations, Japan shaped its modern identity after a Western imperial model. In the words of the 20th-century novelist Natsume Soseki, "this rapid course of development constituted a nervous breakdown in the Japanese national character."⁹ As the world he knew crumbled around him, Yoshitoshi suffered a personal nervous breakdown in 1872. While he completed some *kaika-e* (enlightenment pictures) capturing Japan's identity building, he soon ceased all artistic production and once again sunk into poverty. Due to malnutrition, he frequently fell ill. His mistress Otoko sold all her belongings in an effort to support him. Though he experienced bouts of lucidity, his depressive episodes prevented him from producing his own work. However, he continued teaching. It is said that Yoshitoshi managed to retain a dark sense of humor with his students, who often brought him food from their family homes. A year later, his mental health improved

6. Chris Uhlenbeck, "The phases in the career of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi: a print designer in a time of change" from *Yoshitoshi: Masterpieces from the Ed Freis Collection* (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2011), 15.

7. Stevenson, 19, 26.

8. Though soon sources state that Yoshitoshi watched the battle firsthand, this is likely more legend than fact. Uhlenbeck, 15.

9. Stevenson, 25.

and he returned to his work with a newfound maturity. Adopting the name Taiso, meaning “Great Resurrection,” Yoshitoshi embarked on the most creative period of his career.

THE GREAT RESURRECTION

After centuries of censorship, in 1874 the government lifted the ban on depicting current events. While Yoshitoshi remained interested in the heroes of the past, his embrace of this newfound legality provided fresh inspiration and sparked a substantial shift in his fortune. His prints of the Satsuma Rebellion in particular, an attempted uprising of the samurai class in 1877, buoyed both his reputation and financial situation. In these prints, Yoshitoshi captures the clashing rebel samurai and imperial troops with all the bravado of historical battles. Slowly, the blood drained from his work as overt violence gave way to increasingly psychological explorations of individuals. Yoshitoshi found a steady income through illustration as the popularity of newspapers grew during the Meiji period. From 1875 he worked for the *Postal News*, the first of many newspapers that he would illustrate in the coming years.¹⁰ Yet, his financial woes continued, and his mistress Otoko sold herself to a brothel to support him. Despite her sacrifice and his success, Yoshitoshi struggled to secure financial stability. In 1884, he married Sakamaki Taiko, a former geisha, who appeared to help him remain mentally and financially stable. He adopted her two children, a son and a daughter, the former of which became the master of noh prints, Tsukioka Kogyo (1869-1927).

While Yoshitoshi worked with a variety of prominent publishers later in his career, his connection with Akiyama Buemon (Kokkeido) marked a turning point in his career. Yoshitoshi met Akiyama in the early 1880s. After an encounter with Yoshitoshi’s painting *Fujiwara no Yasumasa Playing the Flute by Moonlight* at a national exhibition in 1882, the publisher convinced the artist to adapt the work into a woodblock print. Today, this triptych is considered one of Yoshitoshi’s crowning achievements. The two men became close and embarked on *One Hundred Views of the Moon* in 1885. Teeming with ancient Chinese and Japanese folklore and history, 19th-century Japanese culture, and classical poetry, this series

presented Meiji-period viewers with a rich record of Japan’s cultural legacy. The first five designs were released in October 1885 and met with such popularity that they typically sold out on the first day of their release. Over the next six years, Yoshitoshi completed 95 more designs, each eagerly awaited by his audience. One anecdote states that the publisher Akiyama Buemon would even bring Yoshitoshi boxed lunches to hurry him along.¹¹ Akiyama ensured that the series was well marketed. Ads for the series emphasize the quality of the printing and the mastery of the artist, calling Yoshitoshi the “great authority of ukiyo-e masters.”¹² Over the course of the series, Yoshitoshi retained a steady salary from newspaper illustration and completed some of his other best-known series.

As Yoshitoshi brought folklore to life through his woodblock prints, his subject matter resonated with a shifting sense of cultural identity. While the first decade of the Meiji period fully embraced all things Western, by the 1880s intellectual circles began to reconsider elements of the Edo-period culture that were so quickly cast aside. *One Hundred Views of the Moon* captures Yoshitoshi’s nostalgia for a Japan past, yet he achieves this through a hybrid of old and new techniques. The subjects and medium recall the golden age of ukiyo-e, while Yoshitoshi integrates Western compositional techniques and aniline dyes. Quiet and reflective, the series is considered a masterpiece of woodblock printmaking. Following Yoshitoshi’s death in 1892, Akiyama was quick to publish the full set complete with a title page, introduction, memorial portrait, and contents page.

HOLDING BACK THE NIGHT

In his final decade, Yoshitoshi designed numerous illustrated books and several other popular series: *New Selection of Eastern Brocade Pictures* (late 1880s) provided an ode to the urban folklore of Edo, while *Thirty-two Aspects of Women* (1888) offered a nod to Utamaro, the great 18th-century master of *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women). Between 1885 and 1888, Yoshitoshi pushed compositional boundaries, bringing folklore and fantasy to the vertical diptych format. Following a major robbery at his home in 1888, Yoshitoshi slipped into mental illness once again. Despite his deteriorating

10. Though published by the newspaper, these illustrations were issued on individual sheets separate from the newspaper itself. Uhlenbeck, 17.

11. In Japanese, *ukiyo-e shi no Taito*. Amy Reigle Newland, “The great authority of ukiyo-e masters: the making of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi’s public persona” from *Yoshitoshi: Masterpieces from the Ed Freis Collection* (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2011), 33.

12. *ibid.*

condition, he began the series *Thirty-six Ghosts* (1889). With its worm-eaten borders and sensitive depictions, the series covered a range of ghoulish tales with the same creativity and refinement as *One Hundred Views of the Moon*. In 1891, Yoshitoshi was again overcome by his illness. He moved in and out of asylums, working intermittently as he completed the final designs for *One Hundred Views*. In the spring of 1892, he suffered a severe mental breakdown and was committed to the Sugamo Asylum. Following his release in May, he rented a house in Honjo rather than return home. On the 9th of June 1892, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage at the age of 53. His death poem read: “Holding back the night/ with its increasing brilliance/ the summer moon.”¹³

Yoshitoshi’s students and supporters erected a memorial in his honor in Mukojima Hyakkaen Garden, Tokyo in 1898. From poets to artists, intellectuals to performers, the list of names on the memorial speaks to Yoshitoshi’s dedication to traditional arts at a moment when their significance was in question.¹⁴ Though ukiyo-e and the living memory of Edo’s floating world dimmed with his death, the art of woodblock printing did not. It is thought that Yoshitoshi taught as many as 200 students over the course of his career. Leading students such as Tsukioka Kogyo, Mizuno Toshikata, and Migita Toshihide guided the woodblock medium into the 20th century as they explored new subjects, formats, and functions. Today, Yoshitoshi is a key figure in the history of Japanese

woodblock printmaking. Active at a moment of intense social, artistic, and political change, his work reflects this era in all its beauty and violence. Ever adapting to the changing world around him, Yoshitoshi bridged the floating world of Edo and the modern character of Tokyo. As 20th-century novelist Akutagawa Ryunosuke writes, “Do we not feel in Yoshitoshi the atmosphere of the city those days, no longer old Edo, not yet the new Tokyo?”¹⁵ Neither lost in the past nor fully grounded in the present, Yoshitoshi conjured a world between.

To avoid confusion, the print order, titles, and poem translations match those in John Stevenson’s *Yoshitoshi’s One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* (1992).

13. Stevenson, 51.

14. Newland, 29.

15. Stevenson, 44.

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Glossary

Atenashi bokashi

“indeterminate printing;” in this shading technique the printer adds extra water to the block, followed by a small amount of pigment, before taking the impression.

Bijin-ga

“Pictures of beautiful women;” a key genre of ukiyo-e.

Biwa

Japanese lute; 4-stringed instrument.

Bokashi

Technique for tonal gradation; while multiple methods exist, most create tonal gradation on the block with a brush or rag, that is then printed onto the impression.

Edo

Precursor to modern Tokyo; cultural center of the Edo period (1603-1868) and seat to the Tokugawa shogunate.

Haiku

Japanese poetic form that is characterized by three lines with a syllable pattern of 5-7-5.

Hanami

Flower viewing; usually refers to cherry blossom viewing in early spring.

Kama

Iron cauldron, typically used to cook rice or heat water.

Kamuro

Child assistant of a courtesan.

Karazuri

Empty printing; a line block for the desired pattern is printed without ink, embossing the pattern onto the paper; often seen in hair and textiles.

Koto

Japanese zither; can be found in 13-stringed and 17-stringed iterations.

Matoi

Large paper standards used to identify a group; for example, those carried by firefighters in order to identify their troop.

Meiji Restoration

Political event where practical rule of Japan shifted from the Tokugawa shogunate back to the imperial line under Emperor Meiji; marked the beginning of the Meiji period (1868-1912).

Onnagata

Male kabuki actors who specialize in female roles.

Otokodate

Rowdy, yet chivalrous townsmen of the Edo period (1603-1868). Sometimes called “street warriors” or “chivalrous commoners.”

Romance of the Three Kingdoms

Attributed to Luo Guanzhong, this 14th-century semi-historical epic describes the civil wars of 3rd-century China. This historical novel is considered one of the Four Great Classical Novels in Chinese literature.

Sasairobeni

Lipstick color scheme where the top lip is red and the bottom is green; possible only with the highest quality *beni* (safflower), this popular cosmetic delivered a red color with one coat, and an iridescent green when applied in several layers.

Seppuku

Self-disembowelment; an honorable death by suicide.

Sho

Mouth organ made of bamboo.

Shomenzuri

A form of burnishing; the printer places a pattern block behind the print and rubs print’s surface with a hard object, such as a boar tooth, to bring out a luster in the polished area.

Suikoden

19th-century Japanese adaption of the 14th-century Chinese classic *The Water Margin*; this story of 108 bandit heroes was enormously popular among ukiyo-e artists.

Tale of Genji

Considered the world’s first novel; Written in the 10th century by Murasaki Shikibu, the epic follows the romantic exploits of the shining prince Genji.

Tale of Heike

Literary epic that chronicles the Genpei War (1180-1185), the battle for control of Japan between the Taira and Minamoto clans. Dated to pre-1330, the exact dating of the text is unknown. Written in a combination of Chinese and Japanese, it thought to be the product of multiple authors collecting tales passed down through oral traditions.

Tatemono

Helmet ornament.

Tokugawa shogunate

Military government that held practical rule of Japan during the Edo period (1603-1868).

Tsujigimi

“Mistress of the street corner;” lowest rank for prostitutes during the Edo Period (1603-1868).

Tsukimi

Moon viewing.

Torii

Mark the entrance to sacred Shinto sites, often made of wood or stone.

Ukiyo-e

“Pictures of the floating world;” art form capturing the pleasure-driven, merchant-class culture that flourished in Edo during the Edo period (1603-1868).

Yukata

Summer kimono, often made of cotton.

Yokohama-e

“Yokohama pictures;” named for the international port, this genre imagined scenes of foreigners and imported objects; popular around in the late 1850s-1860s.

Yoshiwara

Edo’s legalized prostitution district.

A Poem by Takao

Date: 1885

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Choko

Yamamoto to (carver)

The name Takao was used successively by eleven different courtesans in the Yoshiwara, the famous pleasure district of Edo. Each of them was not only beautiful, but also well-versed in the arts of music and poetry. Yoshitoshi depicts the sixth Takao, known for her literary talents. In the *haiku* inscribed in the cartouche she describes her longing for her lover: "By now you must be near Komagata/ a cuckoo calls." Yoshitoshi dresses the beauty in the fashion of the late 17th century, alluding to a golden age when courtesans were valued for both their talents and their beauty. Within the composition, he includes a set of linked verses rife with subtle eroticism. Verses such as these would be exchanged in a witty game between courtesans and their customers.

御届明治十八年十月日
浅草 明治十八年十月日
西工 月岡米次郎
横山 武右衛門
横山 武右衛門





Chang'e Flees to the Moon

Date: 1885
 Medium: Woodblock print
 Size: 14.5" x 10"
 Signature: Yoshitoshi
 Seals: Yoshitoshi, Choko
 Yamamoto to (carver)

In Chinese mythology, Chang'e is the woman in the moon. Her husband was a heroic archer who was rewarded for his services to the gods with the elixir of immortality. In her husband's absence, Chang'e stole the potion and drank it herself. She then ascended to the moon and became a goddess, though some versions of the tale state that she was turned into a frog as punishment. In this design, Yoshitoshi alludes to both of these endings. He captures Chang'e in her ascent, rising above the yellow and grey of the clouds to the blushing moon. As the ribbons of her robes curl in the wind, she glances down at her hand and the small frog atop the empty jade container.

***Rising Moon over Mount Nanping:
Cao Cao***

Date: 1885

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Choko Noguchi

Enkatsu (carver)

Cao Cao (in Japanese, So So) is a prominent figure in the semi-historical epic *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which describes the civil wars of 3rd-century China. Although cast as the villain of the tale, he is as brave and intrepid as any of the heroes. The night before the famous Battle of the Red Cliffs, Cao Cao was in a boat on the Yangtze River. Two crows flew by, an evil omen, but he composed a defiant poem and continued to give orders to his officers for the doomed battle. Yoshitoshi presents this antihero on the eve of his downfall. Though defeat waits beyond the dark cliffs, Cao Cao stands tall with his spear in hand. Yoshitoshi revisits this subject later in this series in the print *The Moon at the Red Cliffs* (p. 88).

明治十八年十月 日
西一月岡米次郎
秋山武正門





The Gion District: Oishi Chikara

Date: 1885
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Choko Enkatsu (carver)

Based on the events of the 18th-century Ako incident, the kabuki drama *Kanadehon Chushingura* presents the story of the 47 loyal retainers who gave their own lives to avenge their master's death. The youngest of the 47 was Oishi Chikara, called Rikiya in the play. In Act VII, Rikiya must deliver a secret letter to his father Yuranosuke, the leader of the vendetta plot. Yuranosuke waits in a teahouse in the Gion area of Kyoto, feigning the life of a drunkard so that the villain, Moronao, will not suspect danger until it is too late. As Rikiya cannot openly deliver the message, he stands outside the teahouse, holding the letterbox, and softly raps on the gate with the hilt of his sword. In this print, Rikiya looks over his shoulder, his knit eyebrows revealing the sense of danger and anxiety that such a plot creates.

Poem by Kikaku

Date: 1885

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Choko Noguchi

Enkatsu (carver)

This print illustrates a well-known *haiku* by the poet Enomoto Kikaku (1661-1707), a pupil of Basho. The poem reads, "Full moon/ on the tatami mats/ shadows of the pine branches." As delicate needles splay their shadows from the bottom right corner, a courtesan reclines on the *tatami* (rush-mats). Her pale skin glows in the light of the autumn moon as her two under-kimono and sash drape from her body, beautifully undone. Despite the brothel setting, Yoshitoshi's image is free of customers or hints of male presence. Instead, he offers a behind-the-scenes peek into life within the Yoshiwara, Edo's legalized prostitution district. Some scholars suggest that this work is an ode to the great ukiyo-e artist Kitagawa Utamaro (c. 1753-1806), who built his career on intimate glimpses into the lives of courtesans.





The Village of the Shi Clan on a Moonlit Night: Kyumonryu

Date: 1885
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi, Yamamoto to (carver)

The Water Margin, a famous 14th-century Chinese tale of 108 bandit heroes, became enormously popular in Japan through its 19th-century adaptation, *Suikoden*. Shi Shin was one of these heroes, nicknamed Kyumonryu, or "the Nine-dragoned," due to his elaborate tattoo of nine dragons. He began life as the son of a wealthy landowner in the village named after his family. One summer evening he learned that three bandits planned to attack his village. He captured the outlaws, but joined their ranks once he heard their stories of injustice and oppression. Yoshitoshi portrays Kyumonryu in a quiet moment before his outlaw life begins. The moon shines upon his tattooed dragons as he stares into the distance in deep contemplation.

Inaba Mountain Moon

Date: 1885

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi no in, Yamamoto to (carver)

Mt. Inaba, near present-day Gifu City, was formerly home to the castle that controlled Mino province. During the civil wars at the end of the 16th century, the castle passed from hand to hand before it was finally destroyed, leaving no more than a picturesque ruin. Yoshitoshi recalls the castle in its former glory. A soldier is seen scaling the mountain in the moonlight, probably for a surprise attack on the castle. In an unusual composition, a strikingly large moon hangs low beneath the soldier as he digs his fingers into the mountainside, pulling himself up. In this print, Yoshitoshi focuses on the emotional world of an individual warrior in the moments before battle, rather than the action and violence that will soon follow.

御届明治十八年十一月十日

神戶 横井 三郎
雪工 岡本 次郎

明治十八年十一月十日
神戶 横井 三郎
雪工 岡本 次郎





Moonlight Patrol: Saito Toshimitsu

Date: 1885
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso

The ill-fated warrior Saito Kuranosuke Toshimitsu appears in two separate prints in *One Hundred Views of the Moon*. Toshimitsu was originally a retainer of the Saito family of Mino province. Later, he served Akechi Mitsuhide. Mitsuhide allied with the successful military leader Oda Nobunaga, yet soon sought revenge for Nobunaga's persistent chastisement. Toshimitsu tried to persuade Mitsuhide not to attack Nobunaga, but when Mitsuhide attacked Nobunaga anyway, Toshimitsu joined forces with him. Toshimitsu was captured soon after the battle and became a monk. Yoshitoshi depicts the warrior in full armor, scouting the land before the battle. As the last hint of sunset fades on the horizon, the moon hangs high. The warrior's sword shimmers in the changing light, foretelling the violence yet to come.

***Mountain Moon After Rain:
Tokimune***

Date: 1885
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi no in, Choko
Enkatsu (carver)

After Kudo Suketsune killed their father, the Soga brothers, Juro Sukenari and Goro Tokimune, grew up consumed with thoughts of revenge. Their opportunity finally came when Suketsune joined Shogun Yoritomo's hunting party near Mt. Fuji. Seizing this opportunity, the brothers broke into Suketsune's camp on a stormy night. As Goro raised his sword above their enemy, Juro, thinking it was wrong to kill a sleeping man, gave a shout. Suketsune rose from his sleep, and the brothers exacted their revenge. Drawn by the commotion, the villain's retainers promptly killed Juro, Goro escaped and was later executed on the orders of Yoritomo. This 12th-century tale inspired over 20 plays and became a staple of Japanese literature. In the darkness of the crescent moon, Goro gazes towards a cuckoo, a symbol of life's transience.

御居明治十八年十月十日
鹽月國次郎
秋山武右衛門





***Moon of Pure Snow at Asano River:
Chikako, the Filial Daughter***

Date: 1885
 Medium: Woodblock print
 Size: 14.5" x 10"
 Signature: Yoshitoshi
 Seals: Yoshitoshi, Choko
 Enkatsu (carver)

The inspiration for this design came from true events of the 19th century. Chikako was the daughter of the ship builder Zeniya Gobei, a wealthy man and a local hero in Northern Japan, known for supplying rice in times of famine. His fortunes shifted when he ran out of money and was later jailed. Chikako prayed for her father's release, jumping to her death in the freezing waters of the Asano River to demonstrate her sincerity. Sadly, her prayers went unanswered and her father died in prison. Yoshitoshi depicts the desperate Chikako in freefall, a bright flutter of fabric against the snowy landscape. She holds her hands together in prayer as two egrets flee from her plummeting form.

Cooling Off at Shijo

Date: 1885

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Shijo or "Fourth Avenue," is a street in Kyoto that leads to the Kamo River. During the summer, the riverbank became a seasonal entertainment district filled with temporary teahouses, restaurants, and dance troops. It was a tradition to mark the hottest days of summer with *Shijogawara yusuzumi*, or "cooling off on Shijo riverbank," a practice that carried on throughout the Meiji period (1868-1912). In this design, Yoshitoshi invites the viewer to take part in this summer pastime vicariously through a young girl in a lightweight summer kimono. She dips her foot into the water to relieve the heat of the evening, as the lantern glows behind her, bearing the symbol of her tea house. The view of her red under-kimono provides a spark of intimacy to the work. In the brilliant light of the full moon, the lantern hardly seems necessary.





Moon Above the Sea at Daimotsu Bay: Benkei

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Choko Enkatsu (carver)

When the hero Minamoto no Yoshitsune fled the wrath of his brother, Yoritomo, he and his followers were caught in a violent storm in the Straits of Shimonoseki. As the water threatened their ranks, Musashibo Benkei, a favorite hero of the Genpei Wars and devout follower of Yoshitsune, took to the front of the ship and saved them with his prayers. In this dynamic design, Yoshitoshi contrasts the fury of the storm with the serenity of Benkei. While the waves crest white and close in around the ship, Benkei appears calm and resolute, his stance strong beneath the ghostly shadows silhouetted in the moon above.

The Cry of the Fox: Konkai

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Choko

Enkatsu (carver)

Performed between acts during a noh play, *kyogen* are brief and comical interludes. *Konkai* (Fox's Cry) is a popular *kyogen*, better known as *Tsurigitsune* (Fox Trapping). In the play, a trapper receives a surprise visit from his uncle, the priest Hakuzosu, who delivers a passionate lecture on the wickedness of trapping foxes. Later, the trapper realizes that the visitor was not his uncle at all but a fox in disguise. Yoshitoshi depicts the sly fox on his way home, still wearing the priest's clothing, but gradually reassuming his true form. Human hands clasp prayer beads as his auburn snout illuminated in the moonlight glances over his shoulder. Foxes are magical creatures in Japanese folklore. While not necessarily malicious, they are known for their trickery.





A Poem by Tsunenobu

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi no in, Enkatsu to (carver)

Minamoto no Tsunenobu was an 11th-century courtier and talented poet. One autumn night, while viewing the moon from his home in Rokujo, he heard a sound like cloth being beaten with a mallet. He recited a poem: "I listen to the sound of cloth being pounded/ as the moon shines serenely/ and believe that there is someone else/ who has not yet gone to sleep." Suddenly, a demonic spirit appeared and recited a Chinese poem similar to Tsunenobu's. Though the demon incited great terror within the household, he did them no harm. In this work, Yoshitoshi shows only the beastly leg of the demon, focusing instead on the human reaction to the monster.

*Mount Yoshino Midnight Moon:
Iga no Tsubone*

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi no in, Enkatsu to
(carver)

The ghost of the traitor Sasaki no Kiyotaka haunted the imperial palace at Yoshino. He terrorized the courtiers until the lady-in-waiting Iga no Tsubone faced the ghost and convinced him to depart. In this design, Yoshitoshi evokes the sense of fear that gripped the court as the ghost curls its clawed fingers around the cartouche, staring madly at the visitor through golden eyes. Tsubone stands tall and unafraid, her long hair flowing down her back as autumn leaves fall around her. A strong, fearless woman, she provides a serenity to the scene, a voice of reason to counter the ghost's leering grin. The moon appears to be in eclipse, adding the eerie atmosphere of the scene.





Poem by Sugawara no Michizane

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Choko Yamamoto
(carver)

Famous for his love of plum blossoms, Sugawara no Michizane was a poet and statesman of 9th-century Japan. Yoshitoshi depicts Michizane as a young courtier composing a poem inspired by his favorite flower. The tree curls around him, its pale buds glowing from painterly branches. The poem reads: "The moon glimmers like bright snow/ and plum blossoms appear like reflected stars/ ah! The golden mirror of the moon passes overhead/ as fragrance from the jade chamber fills the garden." Unlike the loose flowing script found throughout many of the cartouches in *100 Views of the Moon*, Yoshitoshi fills this cartouche with square formal characters, as Michizane wrote his poetry in Chinese.

The Moon at High Tide

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Enkatsu to (carver)

In the popular 15th-century noh play *Takasago*, a Shinto priest meets an old couple using a broom and a rake to tidy the ground beneath a pine tree. They reveal themselves to be the spirits of two famous pine trees, one at Takasago, and one in Sumiyoshi. The elderly couple extolls the longevity of pine trees, explaining that their relationship mirrors the endurance of these trees. Yoshitoshi presents the spirits in intricately patterned and embossed noh robes. Though the moon does not appear in the print, its gentle light bathes the scene. As pine trees symbolize longevity, this play is considered appropriate for New Year's Day and other happy occasions.





An Iron Cauldron and the Moon at Night: Kofuna no Gengo and Koshi Hanzo

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi giga
Seals: Yoshitoshi no in, Enkatsu to (carver)

An unusually large *kama* (iron cauldron) peeks across the left edge of the print. Beside it, a pair of scoundrels named Kofuna no Gengo and Koshi Hanzo plan their foolhardy robbery. Armed with a mallet and a handsaw, they consider how they might smash the *kama*, so that they can carry it away in small pieces. Yet as the viewer knows, their effort will achieve little more than alerting the owner to their thievery. Yoshitoshi portrays this humorous subject in a style close to caricature with exaggerated expressions and comical proportions. Appropriately, this print is signed *Yoshitoshi giga*, or "drawn for amusement by Yoshitoshi." He typically reserved this signature for his caricature and parody prints.

The Moon of Ogurusu in Yamashiro

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

In 1582, in the village of Ogurusu in Yamashiro province, Akechi Mitsuhide killed the military leader Oda Nobunaga and proclaimed himself shogun. Lacking the proper forces to secure his power, Mitsuhide was overthrown by Toyotomi Hideyoshi after only thirteen days. Following a decisive defeat, Mitsuhide fled toward his own castle at Sakamoto. As he passed through the village of Ogurusu on his way, he was ambushed and killed by local peasants. The figure of a stalwart peasant dominates the foreground of Yoshitoshi's unusual composition. In the distance, an unexpected Mitsuhide approaches from the left in the moonlight. Clad in full armor and an elaborate helmet, he rides to his inglorious end.





Suzaku Gate Moon: Hakuga Sanmi

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi no in, Yamamoto to (carver)

The 10th-century noble Semimaru, a blind flutist recognized as a musical luminary, played a beautiful tune that no one could imitate. As he grew old, he regretted that he had no student to whom he could pass on his secret techniques. Hearing this lament, the courtier Minamoto no Hiromasa (aka Hakuga Sanmi), begged Semimaru to take him on as a pupil. The musician agreed, and in time Hiromasa learned to play as well as his teacher. Yoshitoshi presents the young musician playing a duet in the moonlight at Suzaku Gate, the main entrance to Kyoto's *daidairi* (great enclosure) that was home to the imperial palace and government. While Hiromasa can be identified by the chrysanthemum pattern and black courtier's hat, the beard and fashion of the other musician suggests a foreign visitor.

Itsukushima Moon: A Muro Courtesan

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Located southwest of Hiroshima, the island of Itsukushima (or Miyajima) is one of the three *Nihon Sankei*, or "most scenic spots in Japan." The island is home to a famous shrine to Susano-o, a Shinto deity of the moon and sea, heavily patronized by the Taira family before their downfall in the 12th century. In this print, a high-ranking courtesan approaches the island at high tide from Muro, a port in Harima province known for its pleasure district. Towering above her in the moonlight, the main *torii* (gate) of Itsukushima Shrine is partially submerged as she sails through. The small drum, which is visible in the bottom of the boat, suggests that she is a dancer, perhaps visiting the shrine to perform for the annual festival. Beside her sits a large traveling umbrella, its scarlet veil and decorative tassels spilling over the edge of the boat.





Moon and Smoke

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Fires were such a common occurrence in Edo that they earned the nickname "flowers of Edo." Since traditional Japanese buildings were constructed almost entirely of paper and wood, the slightest spark could lead to tragedy. Teams of professional firefighters combatted these frequent disasters. The firemen were colorful characters known for their competitive team spirit, ladder-top acrobatics, and boisterous attitudes. Emblems on their heavily-quilted jackets and *matoi* (elaborate paper standards) identified each team. In Yoshitoshi's design, a single fireman considers the scene. Through the smoke in the bottom right corner, a shadowy figure holds the *matoi* of a rival group, signaling the scale of the blaze. The characters on the fireman's hood and back indicate that he is a *matoi* bearer and a member of company one. As the full moon echoes the paper standard, the fireman curls his fingers beneath the water-drenched protective sleeve. To protect themselves from burns, firefighters would soak their heavy garments in water before heading into the flames.

***Faith in the Third-day Moon:
Yukimori***

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Choko Enkatsu (carver)

Yamanaka Shikanosuke Yukimori was a warrior famous for his great physical strength. He served as a general to the lord of Izumo province during the wars of the 16th century and died at the age of 34. Yukimori believed that the crescent moon or "three-day moon" was a powerful symbol of good luck and always wore a *tatemono* (helmet ornament) in its image. Yoshitoshi echoes the crescent shape with Yukimori's *kamayari*, or "cross spear." The warrior wears a stern expression, asserting an inner strength to match his fierce outward appearance. The gradation of the grey around the figure accentuates Yukimori's physical presence on the page

池田 明治十九年二月 日
豊月岡米次郎
豊月岡米次郎
豊月岡米次郎





Moon of the Pleasure Quarters

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi, Enkatsu to (carver)

Each spring, cherry trees were planted along the main avenue of the Yoshiwara, Edo's licensed pleasure district. Like the delicate cherry blossoms, a courtesan's beauty was fleeting, thus the two beauties were poetically paired. In this print, Yoshitoshi depicts a courtesan out on a moonlit stroll with her small *kamuro* (child apprentice). High atop her lacquered *geta* (wooden sandals), the courtesan gazes at the young girl who has stopped to watch the petals fall in the lamplight. The height of her sandals denotes her high social status, and the pale petals blend with the pattern of her outer kimono. Yoshitoshi uses the word *kuruwa* in the title of this print. While it originally referred to an enclosed area of a castle, it came to mean an enclosed pleasure quarter such as the famous Yoshiwara, Edo's legalized prostitution district. Though the pale blooms of the cherry blossoms signaled a busy time for the district, Yoshitoshi forgoes a scene of an elaborate promenade for a quiet, private moment.

Gravemaker Moon

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Yamamoto to
(carver)

Included among the Six Immortal Poets (*rokkasen*), Ono no Komachi was a 9th-century poet famous for both her talent and her beauty. Her life inspired seven significant *noh* plays, each of which reflected a period in her life. The last, *Sotoba Komachi* or "Grave-post Komachi," presents the poet as an old beggar woman sitting on the fallen grave post, regretting the passing of her beauty. Yoshitoshi portrays this famous scene in all its wistful melancholy. Dressed in the *noh* costume worn by her character, Komachi's tattered hat reveals her struggle, but her face retains a slight flicker of beauty and a wealth of wisdom.

明治十九年一月
月岡米次郎
東京 秋山武子門





Cassia Tree Moon: Wu Gang

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

In Chinese mythology, eight ten-thousand-foot cassia trees grow on the moon. Each autumn the trees shed their crimson leaves, imparting the Harvest Moon with its signature color. Though Yoshitoshi does not depict these trees, he presents their eternal caretaker and the immortal axe-wielder, Wu Gang. A learned Daoist, he possessed great magic but exploited that magic to evil ends. As the gods could not take away his powers, they condemned him to hew the ever-growing boughs of the trees until the end of the world. In this print, Wu Gang considers his punishment but does not seem troubled by this eternal sentence. He points to the moon, mouth ajar beneath his heavy beard, seemingly awed by the task at hand.

Moon of Yamaki Mansion: Kagekado

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

This print illustrates an episode from the *Tale of Heike*, a chronicle of the civil wars of the 12th century. Yoritomo, a leader of the Minamoto Clan, sent Kato Kagekado to assassinate Taira no Kanetaka during a brutal night attack. Kagekado found Kanetaka's looming figure silhouetted by the moonlight on the *shoji* (sliding door). He tricked his opponent by thrusting out his helmet on the end of his *naginata* (a weapon consisting of a sword-like blade attached to a pole). As Kanetaka slashed at the helmet through the *shoji* (sliding door), Kagekado attacked from the opposite side and killed his opponent. This victory marked the Minamoto clan's initial step towards control of Japan.





Chikubushima Moon: Tsunemasa

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Taira no Tsunemasa was a powerful general graced with great talent for poetry and music. During the famous 12th-century wars between the Taira and Minamoto clans, Tsunemasa visited a shrine on the island of Chikubu with his fellow generals. Under the silver light of the moon, they prayed for victory over the Minamoto. The priest there had heard of Tsunemasa's musical skills and presented a lute for him to play. The general played so beautifully that Benten, the goddess of the shrine, appeared in the form of a white dragon and promised victory. Yoshitoshi depicts Tsunemasa alone, his glove cast to his side and his fingers curled around his instrument. Though no white dragon winds over his shoulder, the fabric that hangs from the pine bough alludes to her imminent arrival.

Yugao Chapter from The Tale of Genji

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Murasaki Shikibu authored *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*) at beginning of the 11th century. The drama follows the romantic adventures of the irresistibly handsome Prince Genji. In this print, Yoshitoshi portrays the most mysterious of Genji's lovers. The story tells that Genji fell in love with her at the sight of her handwriting. Persist as he might, the beauty would not reveal her true identity, so he called her Yugao (evening face), after the morning-glory-like flowers that grew around her dilapidated house. One night, she finally agreed to accompany Genji to one of his lavish villas. Once they consummated their love, Yugao died very suddenly, killed by a jealous spirit of a former mistress. Yoshitoshi portrays her as a wistful ghost, delicate and pale as the flower of her namesake.

市川明治十九年三月
日
豐中須賀町三子
豐月岡米次郎
豐秋山武王門
豐





The Moon Through a Crumbling Window: Daruma

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi no in, Yamamoto to (carver)

The Indian prince Bodhidharma (known in Japan as Daruma) traveled from India to China spreading the practice of Zen Buddhism. At Shaolin Temple in Northern China, he sat in meditation without moving for nine years, as a result of which his legs withered away. According to legend, the monk Eka came to study with Daruma, but Daruma refused to respond and continued to meditate. Finally, Eka cut off his arm to prove his commitment to enlightenment. With this gesture, Daruma took him on as a student. In this print, Daruma sits unconcerned while the temple walls crumble around him, providing a window to the moon. As the building falls away, he moves closer to enlightenment.

Mount Ji Ming Moon: Zi Fang

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Zi Fang was the literary name of Zhang Liang (in Japanese, Shibo), who served as the chief advisor to Liu Bang, the first emperor of the Han Dynasty (202 BC - 9 AD, 25 - 220 AD) in ancient China. It was he who persuaded the emperor to join forces with Xiang Yu to overthrow the tyrannical state of Qin. However, the alliance did not hold. Liu Bang's army pursued Xiang Yu and surrounded him, but he eluded defeat. One night, Zhang Liang approached the enemy camp and played one of the *sheng* (a mournful-sounding mouth organ) melodies from their home province. When the enemy soldiers heard the music, they were so homesick that most of them deserted. Xiang Yu subsequently committed suicide and Liu Bang became emperor of China. Zhang Liang's robes flutter on the wind as it carries that fatal melody behind enemy lines.

中尾明治十九年六月五日
豊月岡米次郎
出版利也堂主人





The Moon at Kitayama: Toyohara Sumiaki

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Toyohara Sumiaki was a courtier and talented musician who served under Emperor Go-Kashiwabara in the early 16th century. One night, while playing his flute in the moonlight on the moor of Kitayama, he found himself surrounded by wolves. Fearing for his life, he began to play his favorite song one last time. Although he expected to feel the tear of his flesh between their claws and teeth, the wolves were entranced by the tune. They listened quietly before returning to the forest. Sumiaki's fear is tangible in this print. The wind whips his robes around him, accentuating his apprehension. The moon bathes the scene in an eerie light, illuminating the many sharp teeth of the wolves.

***Dawn Moon of the Shinto Rites:
Festival on a Hill***

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi sha
Seals: Yoshitoshi

This print depicts a procession celebrating the Sanno Festival at Hie Shrine, a summer festival still celebrated in Tokyo today. An elaborately costumed figure stands atop the float and raises a *gobei*, a paper-covered wand used to evoke the Shinto gods. Typically, these figures were not real people, but dolls. To the bottom right, a drum topped with an ornament of a rooster, a symbol of good government, appears in the procession. The ornate brocade that covers the float matches the drama of the figure's flowing red wig and spectacular costume.





The Moon's Inner Vision: Taira no Tomoume

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.25" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

In this print, Yoshitoshi presents the blind warrior Taira no Tomoume in a brutal fight to the death. While many of Yoshitoshi's early works depict battle scenes rife with carnage, he spares the explicit bloodbath in *One Hundred Views of the Moon*. In lieu of graphic violence, Yoshitoshi concentrates on the emotional quality of the battle and the human struggle of the combatants. This print is one of the most active battles in this series. Details, such as the fallen banner, suggest that Tomoume's situation is hopeless, yet his face reveals his determination to fight until the end. The moon appears in this print only through the warrior's personal emblem, a poem attached to his back referring to his heart and the moon. It reads: "from darkness/ I have wandered lost/ on to a darker path/ the moon of my heart is becoming clouded."

**Mount Otowa Moon: Bright God
Tamura**

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

In the late Nara period (710-794), Sakanoue no Tamuramaro, known as General Tamura, was sent by the emperor to defeat the native people in the Seizaka Mountains. Following a successful campaign, he founded the famous Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto. He died in 811 and was deified as the Shinto god Tamura Myojin. In the noh play *Tamura*, a traveling priest arrives at Kiyomizu Temple on a moonlit spring night. The ghost of Tamuramaro appears to him twice: first under a blossoming cherry tree as a boy sweeping fallen petals, and again, as the brave general. Yoshitoshi portrays both ghostly encounters at once: Tamuramaro stands with a broom beneath the cherry blossoms, but wears the armor of a general. The grey mask evokes those worn on the noh stage, strengthening the print's allusion to the play. Barely lit by a cloud-shrouded moon, the familiar shape of Kiyomizu Temple can be discerned from the shadows.





Takakura Moon: Hasebe Nobutsura

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

In the 12th century, the Taira clan ruled under Taira no Kiyomori, grandfather to the strategically installed infant emperor. In 1180, the nobleman Minamoto no Yoritomo hatched a plot to overthrow the Taira and restore the imperial line to the rightful heir, Prince Mochihito. When the plot came to light, the prince had to flee the castle to avoid arrest. Hasebe Nobutsura was the retainer of Prince Mochihito. Nobutsura helped the prince and his foster brother escape dressed as courtly women. Since upper-class women obscured their entire form with large, veiled hats while traveling, the two men stayed well-hidden and escaped the oncoming soldiers. Nobutsura remained behind to defend the castle. Yoshitoshi portrays the loyal retainer at the edge of the trees, watching the prince escape into the misty night.

A Glimpse of the Moon: Kaoyo

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso

As told in the 14th-century history *Taiheiki*, Lady Kaoyo's stunning beauty made her famous throughout the shogun's court. Enchanted by the mere thought of her, Lord Kono Moronao decided that he needed to witness her beauty firsthand. With the help of another woman of the court, he secretly watched Lady Kaoyo as she left her bath. Obsessed with what he had seen, he tried to take Lady Kaoyo for himself by accusing her husband Enya Takasada of treason. Takasada and his family were killed as they tried to flee. In this work, Lady Kaoyo steps into the dim light of the crescent moon, unaware of the voyeur beyond the fence. Moronao peeks over his fan, aroused by the private scene.





Reflected Moonlight

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Lady Arika no Naishi served as a lady-in-waiting to the empress during the Heian period (794-1185). She fell hopelessly in love with a senior counselor, but her passion was unrequited. Devastated, she drowned herself in Lake Biwa. The cartouche holds a poem in which she expresses her feelings of despair: "How hopeless it is/ it would be better for me to sink beneath the waves/ perhaps then I could see my man from the Moon Capital." Yoshitoshi portrays the lady holding a lute in a small boat. She is lavishly dressed and wears the flowing hairstyle of the Heian court. As the hand holding the plectrum wipes her tears, the moonlight shines on the choppy water.

*Inamura Promontory Moon at
Daybreak: Nitta Yoshisada*

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

In 1333, Nitta Yoshisada planned to attack the Hojo army at Kamakura. However, as his army approached the castle, he found that it was strongly defended on land and that the sea entrance was too rough to cross. That night, he prayed to the gods of the sea, throwing his sword into the water as an offering. When morning came, the tide receded so far that Yoshisada's army could march across the sand and defeat the enemy. Presenting Yoshisada in the early morning light, Yoshitoshi takes great care in each detail of the general's armor. Oversized dragonflies adorn his underlayer, while a dragon curls across his ornate breastplate. The hero raises his sword as an offering; head bowed in sincerity.





The Moon of the Milky Way

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Yamamoto to (carver)

Born to the Lord of Heaven, the weaver maiden Shokujo was responsible for weaving the fabric of heaven. She worked diligently until the day she fell in love with the herdsboy Kengyu. Following their marriage, Shokujo stopped weaving, distracted by her romance. Exasperated, her father determined that the lovers would only meet once a year, separating the two with the River of Heaven, or the Milky Way. Each year, on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar, the couple would be reunited. This story, originally a Chinese myth, is the basis of the Japanese Tanabata Festival. During Tanabata, people write their wishes on long strips of paper and tie them to bamboo branches. The heavenly couple is represented by the stars Vega and Aquila, which come into conjunction during the festival days. Yoshitoshi depicts the couple on opposite cloudbanks, moments away from their yearly reunion.

Miho no Matsubara: Takeda Shingen

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Miho no Matsubara is the name of the famous pine forest that juts into Suruga Bay. In this print, the 16th-century warlord Takeda Shingen sits upon a golden cloud, appreciating this famous view of Mt. Fuji. Though depicted in quiet reflection rather than battle, Shingen appears fierce even at rest. Yoshitoshi conveys Shingen's wild power through his dress: shoes of bearskin, an antler on his helmet and a tiger skin scabbard. He appears engrossed in the beauty of his surroundings, which are described by the poem in the cartouche. It reads: "On the coast at Kiyomi even the sky bars the way/ The moon is blocked by the Miho pine groves."





Moon of the Enemy's Lair: Little Prince Ousu

Date: 1886
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

The famous hero Ousu was the son of Emperor Keiko, who ruled Yamato (the region of Nara, Kyoto, and Osaka) during legendary times. Ousu was sent to quell the rebellion of the Kumaso, a native people in Kyushu. As young and beautiful as he was strong and fierce, the young hero borrowed clothes and disguised himself as a woman. In this disguise, he was able to infiltrate an enemy banquet and kill both of the Kumaso leaders. He was thereafter known as Yamato Takeru no Mikoto, "The Champion of Japan." Yoshitoshi presents the hero on his way to join the Kumaso women. While his costume is convincing, behind his back his sword blade catches the moonlight, foreshadowing the violence to come.

Theater District: Dawn Moon

Date: 1886

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Choko Enkatsu (carver)

In 19th-century Tokyo, theaters were concentrated in the *Shibaimachi* district. Visitors could see kabuki plays, attend teahouses, restaurants, and enjoy other forms of entertainment. For many, a trip to *Shibaimachi* offered an opportunity to show off. Yoshitoshi presents a particularly elegant woman in the purple glow of the predawn light. In keeping with the fashion of her day, a red top lip and green bottom lip framed her blackened teeth. While the blackened teeth indicate that she is married, the two-tone lips suggest wealth. This color scheme, known as *sasairobeni*, could be achieved only through the highest quality *beni*, a lipstick made from safflower. This popular cosmetic delivered a red color with one coat, and an iridescent green when applied in several layers. The beauty dominates the foreground, while graceful shadows move through the morning mist behind her.





A Classical Poem

Date: 1887
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Choko Enkatsu (carver)

This print illustrates a poem by the Heian-period (794-1185) noblewoman Akazome Emon. After a long night spent waiting for a lover to arrive, she regrets getting her hopes up and missing sleep. Her poem reads: "I wish I had gone to bed immediately/ but now the night has passed/ and I watch the moon descend." Hand poised on the door, she still hopes that her lover might arrive. Her hair flows into a dark pool behind her, while her eyebrows have been shaved off and drawn as small circles, known as "moth-eyebrows," in the fashion of the period. Yoshitoshi conveys her frustration from a lost night of sleep, but also that last glimmer of hope, as she remains in the doorway.

Hazy-Night Moon: Kumasaka

Date: 1887

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

The bandit priest Kumasaka Chohan led a group of robbers. Minamoto no Yoshitsune killed Chohan when his gang staged a night attack on an inn where Yoshitsune was staying. In this scene from the noh play *Kumasaka*, the ghost of Kumasaka Chohan appears to a traveling priest one moonlit night beside a pine tree. On the stage, neither the pine tree nor the moon is shown—the audience imagines them from the dialogue. Yoshitoshi depicts the ghost in an extravagant noh costume and fierce, dynamic posture. The ghost's halberd cannot be contained by the composition, its blade disappearing off the left edge.





Obon Festival Moon

Date: 1887
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Choko Enkatsu (carver)

Obon is a popular summer celebration in Japan. Held during the full moon, spirits of the dead temporarily return to earth to visit their living descendants. This Buddhist festival is a merry one, filled with celebration in the form of song, dance and delicious meals. Families leave offerings of food for their ancestors and hang lanterns to guide their way to and from the spirit realm. In this print, Yoshitoshi presents a group dressed in *yukata* (summer kimono) performing *bon odori*, a traditional dance with singing and handclapping. The gleeful dancers ascend the left side of the composition towards the full moon. Faced with the rapid modernization of his time, Yoshitoshi treasured traditional Japanese customs such as this festival.

A Poem by Kinto

Date: 1887

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Enkatsu to (carver)

The poet Fujiwara no Kinto (966-1041) was an accomplished member of the Heian court. He compiled *Wakan Roeishu*, a popular collection of Chinese and Japanese poetry, as well as the famous anthology *36 Immortal Poets of Japan*. In this print, Yoshitoshi illustrates a poem by Kinto, a peaceful nature scene characteristic of his poetic style: "In the midst of glimmering whiteness/ among the night's moon shadows/ I part the snow and pluck plum blossoms." Kinto stands in the freshly fallen snow in the courtyard of the imperial palace. The flowers that inspired his verse catch the moonlight on their delicate petals. The direct contrast of Kinto's heavy black robes and the crisp white of the snow creates an intense sense of drama within this hushed ode to winter's beauty.





Huai River Moon: Wu Zixu

Date: 1887

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Two different tales may have inspired this design. In the first, Wu Yun, also called Wu Zixu (in Japanese, Go Shinsho), was the son of the prime minister of the state of Chu in ancient China. When the king of Chu murdered his father and brother, Wu Zixu was forced to flee to the neighboring state of Wu. When he led a campaign back to Chu, he was ferried across the river by a fisherman. While the title of this print alludes to this tale, scholars recognize a second possibility: The story of Jiang Ziya. Emperor Shi Bei found the Daoist sage Jiang Ziya on the bank of the river fishing with a strait nail on a pole with no bait. When asked why, Jiang Ziya explained that he was more focused on philosophizing than catching fish, yet the fish came to his nail anyhow. The emperor took the sage as his counselor and Jiang Ziya served the emperor admirably for twenty years.

Poem by Hitotose

Date: 1887
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taio, Enkatsu to (carver)

Though at the heart of Edo's floating world, the Yoshiwara was not exempt from the strict, hierarchical nature of Edo period society. Its inhabitants ranged from elegant, highly trained courtesans to the lowest class of prostitutes known as *tsujigimi*, or "mistress of the street corner." These women wandered about carrying their straw bedrolls, ready to transact business at any time. The poem in the cartouche by Hitotose Oshun describes how the heavy make-up of *tsujigimi* caught the moonlight. It reads: "Like reflections in the rice-paddies/ the faces of *tsujigimi* in the darkness/ are exposed by the autumn moonlight." Yoshitoshi depicts a stunning *tsujigimi* with appropriate eroticism, from the glimpse of her red undergarment to the headscarf grasped gingerly between her teeth. Above, the moon glows through the dark clouds, an effect that required several blocks to achieve.





*The Moon and the Helm of a Boat:
Taira no Kiyotsune*

Date: 1887
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

The 12th-century clashes of the Taira and Minamoto clans served as a favorite inspiration for later writers and artists. In 1183, the Minamoto drove the Taira, who had ruled Japan for twenty years, out of the capital. Two years later, the Minamoto forced the Taira to retreat by boat from their temporary base in Kyushu. Kiyotsune, a sensitive young member of the Taira clan, decided the situation was hopeless. He calmed his mind, playing his flute under the moon, and then threw himself into the sea. Yoshitoshi sets Kiyotsune high in the composition, absorbed in his final song. Butterflies, the symbol of the Taira clan, adorn the purple fabric at the front of the ship. In the bottom right corner, the torches of the enemy ships approach, their devastation imminent.

Lady Gosechi

Date: 1887

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

As pampas grass peeks through the tattered blinds, music echoes throughout the ruined palace. Partially hidden behind the fraying fabric, Lady Gosechi plucks the strings of her *koto* (Japanese zither), rousing memories of former splendor in the hearts of her audience. In this design, Yoshitoshi captures an emotion—nostalgia—rather a specific tale. Though now she wears the clothes of a nun, one wonders if she was once a celebrated beauty. Her courtly companions weep as they recall the splendid festivities of bygone days. The print stirs a powerful sense of longing and loss with bittersweet beauty. While the figures' attire places the scene in the Heian period (794-1185), it is likely that Yoshitoshi keenly felt this emotion himself as the floating world of Edo gave way to modern Tokyo.





Mount Tobisu Dawn Moon: Toda Hanbei Shigeyuki

Date: 1887
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

The warrior Toda Hanbei Shigeyuki stands on a hill as the 1575 Battle of Mount Tobisu rages between the forces of the Takeda clan and Oda Nobunaga. The flags below bear the *mon* (crests) of the great families who were involved in the fight. Individual warriors are identified by *sashimono*, symbols worn on poles attached to their backs. Usually, this symbol was a flag or card with an appropriate emblem. Shigeyuki used a human skull, which likely terrified his enemies. While the title of the print identifies the figure as Shigeyuki, some scholars suggest that the figure is in fact Sakai Tadatsugu, the general who marched soldiers through the pouring rain to the top of Mount Tobisu. The dark blue crest of the Sakai family on some of the banners supports this theory.

Sumiyoshi Full Moon: Lord Teika

Date: 1887

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Chin resting on his chest, the 13th-century poet Fujiwara no Sadaie, also known as Lord Teika, sleeps soundly on the stairs of Sumiyoshi Shrine. Located near present-day Osaka, this Shinto shrine honored the god of poetry. It was said that the deity would appear to visitors in dreams or visions, especially if they were poets themselves. In this design, Lord Teika receives such a visit. The old god emerges from the darkness and stands over the sleeping man. Yoshitoshi emphasizes the dreamlike atmosphere through the smoky effect of *atenashi bokashi*, or "indeterminate printing." In this technique, the printer adds extra water to the block, followed by a small amount of pigment, before taking the impression.





A Poem by Wang Changling

Date: 1887
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Wang Changling was an 8th-century Chinese poet active at the height of the Tang Dynasty (618-906). His poem reads: "The night is still and a hundred flowers are fragrant in the western palace/ she orders the screen to be rolled up, regretting the passing spring/ with the zither across her lap she gazes at the moon/ the colors of the trees are hazy in the indistinct moonlight." In Yoshitoshi's interpretation, a *guqin* (a seven-stringed zither) rests on a noblewoman's lap. Dressed in Chinese fashion, she cranes her long, elegant neck to her right. Behind her, a servant rolls up the blinds to let moonlight pour into the room.

Poem by Fukami Jikyu

Date: 1887

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Enkatsu to (carver)

The term *otokodate* refers to the rowdy yet chivalrous townsmen of the Edo period (1603-1868). These vigilantes swaggered about the streets of Edo, showing off their fashionable clothing and defending fellow commoners against overbearing samurai. In this print, the *otokodate* Fukami Jikyu strikes a bold and prideful pose to show off the flashy floral pattern of his kimono. The black has been burnished to bring out a checkered pattern, adding to the extravagant nature of the outfit. The printer achieved the effect, known as *shomenzuri*, by placing the pattern block behind the print and rubbing the print surface with a hard object, such as a boar tooth. This use of pressure would bring out a luster in the polished area. Around Jikyu, cherry blossom petals catch the moonlight. As they rain through the composition, Jikyu's *haiku* reads: "The full moon/ coming with a challenge/ to flaunt its beautiful brow." Though Jikyu's poem admits that the full moon is very lovely, his posture suggests it is not as handsome as Jikyu himself.





Poem by Gen'i

Date: 1887

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Yamamoto to (carver)

Maeda no Munehisa (also known as Maeda Gen'i) was a talented poet of the 16th-century. He entered into priesthood in his youth before becoming a retainer of the powerful warlord Oda Nobunaga. When Nobunaga fell to Akechi Mitsuhide, Gen'i guarded the life of Nobunaga's son. He was rewarded for his loyalty with a political position. After Nobunaga's death in 1582, he went on to serve as a close counselor of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Yoshitoshi portrays Gen'i in his priestly robes, composing a poem at a low lacquer and gold table. Overwhelmed by the beauty of the moonlight, his poem reads: "Usually I dislike a cloudy sky/ tonight I realize that a cloudy sky/ makes me appreciate the light of the moon." As a golden silhouette glows through the blinds, Yoshitoshi captures the moonlight on the overprinted branches outside.

Reading by Moonlight: Zi Luo

Date: 1888

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Known in Japan as Shiraku, Zi Luo was a Chinese philosopher, disciple of Confucius, and one of the Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety. He came from a poor family and loyally worked as a porter to support his aging parents. Though he relied on wild plants for sustenance, he made sure to feed his parents fresh rice. In this print, Yoshitoshi combines Zi Luo's dedication to his parents and his love of learning. Dressed in tattered clothing and barefoot, Zi Luo carries a heavy bag of rice over his shoulder. In his other hand, he holds a book, satisfying his passion for knowledge and need to provide for his parents. Yoshitoshi portrays this filial son in a muted color palette. The craggy mountains and light *bokashi* (color gradation) evoke the imagined landscapes and ink washes of Chinese literati painting.





A Poem by Yorimasa

Date: 1888
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Choko Enkatsu (carver)

Minamoto no Yorimasa was a 12th-century warrior and accomplished poet. *The Tale of Heike* recounts his defeat of the *nue*, a monster with the body of a badger, the face of a monkey, the paws of a tiger, and a tail tipped with a snake's head. In gratitude, the emperor presented the warrior with a famous sword. As a court official descended the palace steps to present Yorimasa with his reward, a cuckoo called. Inspired, the official recited half of a poem: "Does the cuckoo also/ announce its name from above the clouds." Yorimasa knelt, looked up at the crescent moon, and humbly responded: "I only bent my bow/ and the arrow shot itself." Yoshitoshi captures this poetic moment. Face upturned to the night sky, Yorimasa kneels at the palace steps and holds out his arm to receive the sword.

In the Moonlight Under the Trees a Beautiful Woman Comes

Date: 1888

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Under the brilliant light of the full moon, a lovely lady in Chinese dress and hairstyle stands beside a flowering plum tree. A fan poised in her right hand, she demurely raises her left to cover her mouth with her sleeve. Yoshitoshi draws upon a popular theme in Chinese painting—the spirit of the plum tree. The theme came from the story of Zhao Shixiong, a poet at the turn of the 7th century. In the tale, the poet falls asleep while admiring the plum blossoms and is visited by the beautiful spirit of the tree in his dreams. The seven-character inscription in the cartouche, which describes this scene, is written in the form of classical Chinese poetry. Her downturned head emphasizes her double chin, a traditional Tang Dynasty (618-907) standard of beauty, while her heavily embossed outer garment conveys a sense of luxury.





***Received Back into Moon Palace:
Bamboo Cutter***

Date: 1888
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi, Yamamoto to
(carver)

In this famous fairytale, an old bamboo cutter discovers a tiny baby girl inside of a hollow bamboo stem. He takes her home to his wife, where the child grows into a beautiful young woman in a miraculously short time. Her name is Kaguyahime, "Shining Princess." Many suitors attempt to court her, but she gives each an impossible task and each is defeated. When the news of her beauty reaches the emperor, he asks for her hand in marriage. Finally, Kaguyahime reveals that she came from the moon to answer the old couple's desire for a child, but that she must now leave them and return to her home. Yoshitoshi depicts her heavenly ascent. The bamboo cutter has fallen to his knees as he begs her not to go, face upturned and arms raised in his plea. As Kaguyahime rises on a cloud, flanked by heavenly attendants, her face reveals her sorrow as she leaves her earthly family.

Gojo Bridge Moon: Yoshitsune

Date: 1888

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Yoshitoshi presents the 12th-century hero Minamoto no Yoshitsune soaring through the air during his famous duel with Benkei at Gojo Bridge. In this story, Benkei waited in the shadows at this bridge to steal the swords of all who crossed. One evening, seventeen-year-old Yoshitsune approached the bridge playing his flute, his fine sword on his hip. Benkei expected a quick victory, yet Yoshitsune proved to be an unbeatable opponent and Benkei admitted defeat and became Yoshitsune's most faithful follower. In this design, Yoshitoshi captures Yoshitsune's talent for martial arts, depicting the young warrior in mid-air. Yoshitoshi forgoes the action of the clash to focus on experience of the individual.





Moon of Enlightenment: Hotei

Date: 1888

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi sha

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Hotei is the god of good fortune and happiness and is one of the Seven Gods of Luck. He is often depicted as a jolly round man in untidy clothing carrying a huge bag of treasures. Hotei is identified with the 10th-century Chinese monk Budai, who wandered about the country carrying his belongings in a linen bag. Many people believed that this carefree, wandering monk was in fact an incarnation of Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future. Yoshitoshi titled this work "Moon of Enlightenment," referring to the child-like wonder on the god's face. Finger outstretched towards the full moon, the jovial figure reclines against his bag, a Chinese-style fan resting on his knee. His long earlobes indicate his immortality.

The Moon of the Moor: Yasumasa

Date: 1888

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Choko Enkatsu (carver)

Fujiwara no Yasumasa was a renowned musician of the Heian Period (794-1185). As he made his way home one evening, playing his flute, his wicked brother Hakamadare Yasusuke (also known as Kidomaru) began to follow him. Yasusuke planned to attack his brother and steal Yasumasa's fine clothing, yet he was so charmed by the beautiful sound of the flute that he abandoned his evil intentions. In this print, dark clouds obscure the moon as Yasusuke creeps through the pampas grass. Yasumasa's posture sways with the tune of his song. Yoshitoshi also illustrated this tale as a painting in 1882. Upon viewing the work at a national exhibition, the publisher Akiyama Buemon encouraged Yoshitoshi to reimagine the work as a woodblock print triptych. Today, that print is widely considered one of Yoshitoshi's most important works. This initial collaboration between artist and publisher sparked *One Hundred Views of the Moon* just two years later.





A Poem by Abe no Nakamaro

Date: 1888
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

In the 8th century, the Japanese courtier Abe no Nakamaro was sent on a diplomatic mission to China. There he composed a poem expressing his homesickness: "As I look out into the vast expanse/ can this be the same moon/ that I saw rise in Kasuga behind Mount Mikasa?" In one version of the story, Nakamaro composed this poem after the Chinese had locked him into a high tower to starve. A more pleasant and plausible version tells that he composed the poem at a farewell party given by his Chinese friends before he returned to Japan. In this print, Nakamaro, wearing a Japanese courtier's cap, and another man, with Chinese clothes and fan, admire the moon from a high balcony.

Katada Bay Moon: Saito Kuranosuke

Date: 1888
 Medium: Woodblock print
 Size: 14.5" x 10"
 Signature: Yoshitoshi
 Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Saito Kuranosuke was a 16th-century retainer of Akechi Mitsuhide, the warrior who killed Oda Nobunaga in 1582. Once Toyotomi Hideyoshi killed Mitsuhide and defeated his forces at Yamazaki, Saito Kuranosuke and his son, Toshimitsu, fled to Katada in Omi province. Here, they sought safety in the home of his former nurse. Kuranosuke fell ill with a high fever and was captured by his enemies. He was executed and his son became a monk. In Yoshitoshi's design, Kuranosuke looks over his shoulder to the fence of his former nurse's house—the place where he will meet his end. His horse casts its eyes up towards its rider, expressing the same uneasiness gnawing at Kuranosuke. In the background, Lake Biwa reflects the silver moonlight.





Shizu Peak Moon: Hideyoshi

Date: 1888
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Widely considered to be one of the greatest heroes in Japanese history, Toyotomi Hideyoshi was a 16th-century military leader and gifted politician. He unified Japan after years of civil war and even tried to invade China. Hideyoshi served under Oda Nobunaga until Nobunaga was assassinated in 1582. A struggle followed to determine the warlord's successor. At the Battle of Shizugatake, Hideyoshi defeated his rivals and established himself as the most powerful man in Japan. Yoshitoshi presents the hero in full armor on the shore of Lake Biwa, moments before his decisive morning attack. Hideyoshi's iconic helmet bursts through the right margin of the composition as he uses a giant shell as a war trumpet, sounding the attack. The dawn moon sets behind Shizugatake Hill, its pale reflection mirrored in the water.

Joganden Moon: Minamoto no Tsunemoto

Date: 1888

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Minamoto no Tsunemoto was a 10th-century courtier who saved the life of Emperor Shujaku. One evening, a demonic stag with red eyes and a mouth full of dagger-like teeth appeared on the roof of the Joganden Palace in Kyoto. As it threatened the emperor on his evening stroll, Tsunemoto shot the monster down with a single arrow. Yoshitoshi presents the stag at the moment of impact; the archer's hand is still drawn back, the deer's head has yet to hit the ground. The animal lacks the demonic nature described in the story and appears as a harmless young stag. Tsunemoto stands strong beneath the falling autumn leaves, dynamic in his stance, his elaborate clothing suspended through his movements. While the warrior's face is turned away from the viewer, the deer's dark eye catches the moonlight.





Moon of the Southern Sea

Date: 1888
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

The merciful bodhisattva Kannon (Guanyin in Chinese) appears in many different forms, both male and female. She is a manifestation of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, whose original Indian form was male. Yet, in China and Japan, Kannon is typically depicted as female. In this print, Kannon sits on an island with her vase of healing water behind her; the willow branch used to apply the water is placed in the vase. Yoshitoshi contrasts the serenity of the white-robed goddess with the violence of the waves breaking around the rock where she sits. Black clouds obscure the pink-tinged moon, outshined by the radiance of Kannon's halo.

**Seson Temple Moon: Captain
Yoshitaka**

Date: 1888
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Fujiwara no Yoshitaka was a courtier and an accomplished poet of the 10th century. His works are included in the famous anthology, *One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets*. A devout Buddhist, he wanted to become a monk, yet family responsibilities prevented him from doing so. Yoshitaka died during a smallpox epidemic when he was only twenty-one years old. In this print, the handsome, melancholy young man almost seems to be aware of his impending death. Yoshitoshi presents the ill-fated courtier on the grounds of Seson-ji, a small temple outside of Kyoto. The fading light and quiet landscape amplify Yoshitaka's loneliness.





Mount Ashigara Moon: Yoshimitsu

Date: 1889
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi, Enkatsu to (carver)

A famous musician and warrior of the Heian Period (794-1185), Minamoto no Yoshimitsu studied the *sho*, a mouth organ made of bamboo. His teacher Toyohara Tokimoto shared all his musical secrets with his student, but died before he could pass them on to his own son Tokiaki. When Yoshimitsu left for battle against the Kiyowara family in 1087, he noticed that Tokiaki was following him. Yoshimitsu urged Tokiaki to return home, but the young man refused. Finally, Yoshimitsu realized that Tokiaki wanted to learn his father's musical secrets. The pair stopped at Mount Ashigara and Yoshimitsu taught Tokiaki the songs of his father. Satisfied, Tokiaki returned home. In this print, Yoshimitsu holds his precious instrument to his lips as a tree trunk cuts a dramatic diagonal through the composition.

Ishiyama Moon: Lady Murasaki

Date: 1889

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Born around 978, Murasaki Shikibu was the author of the world's first novel, *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*). This epic follows the romantic exploits of the shining prince Genji. Enormously popular in the author's lifetime, *The Tale of Genji* has influenced art, literature, and poetry from its 10th-century debut through today. However, in this design, Yoshitoshi focuses on the author herself. Yoshitoshi portrays Lady Murasaki at Ishiyama Temple, where she is said to have written *The Tale of Genji*. She sits on the temple's veranda beneath the full moon. Resting her elbows on the blank scroll unrolled before her, she gazes out at the rocky cliffs, waiting for a spark of inspiration. *One Hundred View of the Moon* includes an interpretation of the fourth chapter from *The Tale of Genji* (p. 37).

明治二十一年十月十日印刷
日本印刷株式會社
年十月一日版
印刷發行所 秋山武右衛門





Mount Miyaji Moon: Moronaga

Date: 1889

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Fujiwara no Moronaga was a 12th-century statesman known for his musical skills. Taira no Kiyomori banished Moronaga from the capital on two occasions: once to the island of Shikoku and once to Owari. Fortunately, his poetic sensibilities allowed him to enjoy views of the moon from such rustic locales. In this print, Yoshitoshi depicts an episode from his exile to Shikoku. Inspired by the natural beauty of Mount Miyaji, Moronaga is settled between the trees to play his *biwa* (lute). As the moon peeks under the auburn foliage, an anonymous woman hears Moronaga's song as she crests the hill. Completely absorbed in his playing, he is unaware of his audience. Though he appears peaceful and composed, his unkempt hair reminds the viewer of his exile.

Jade Rabbit: Sun Wukong

Date: 1889

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Songoku, the Monkey King (Sun Wukong in Chinese) is the hero of the 16th-century Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. He was a mischievous deity whose pranks wreaked havoc in Heaven. To atone for his misdeeds, he was assigned to serve as a bodyguard for a pious monk travelling between China and India carrying the Buddhist scriptures. In this print, Songoku holds his iron spear, cavorting with another legendary animal, the Jade Rabbit. The association between a white rabbit and the moon can be traced deep into Japanese folklore. According to the *Kojiki*, the waning and waxing of the moon is tied to a mythical rabbit losing and finding its skin. The character of the Jade Rabbit bears Chinese and Indian origins. According to Chinese tradition, this immortal rabbit can be seen silhouetted against the full moon, preparing ingredients for the elixir of life.





A Poem About a Broken Bucket

Date: 1889
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

In Japanese art and literature, the full moon is traditionally considered particularly beautiful when reflected in water. In this print, Yoshitoshi presents the famous 18th-century *haiku* poet, calligrapher, and painter Chiyo in an elaborate kimono. Beneath the ripe persimmons and skeletal pampas grass, she glances down towards the broken bucket that just slipped from her grasp. The poem in the cartouche reads: "The bottom of the bucket/ which Lady Chiyo filled has fallen out/ the moon has no home in the water." These anonymous lines describe Chiyo's plight: the broken bucket will not hold water, much less, contain the moon. Instead, the autumn moonlight flows freely, diffusing across wet ground.

Poem by Hidetsugu

Date: 1889

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Though Toyotomi Hideyoshi conquered Japan at the end of the 16th century, he did not have an heir for many years. He therefore adopted his nephew and gave him the name Hidetsugu. The relationship quickly soured. Though tales spread about Hidetsugu's foul character and violent tendencies, modern historians dismiss these accounts as rumors. Within two years, a true heir was born to Hideyoshi and he turned against his adopted son. On the premise of a suspected coup, Hideyoshi imprisoned Hidetsugu in a temple before ordering him to commit suicide. In this design, Yoshitoshi portrays Hidetsugu reflecting on his unhappy fate. The poem in the cartouche reads: "Did I ever imagine that/ as the clouds of the high autumn sky cleared/ I would view the moon through a bamboo lattice window." He sits upon an extravagant textile, head bowed in contemplation. To the left of the composition, his retainer waits for the inevitable.





The Moon of Shinobugaoka

Date: 1889

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

During the Edo period (1603-1868), visitors would flock to Shinobugaoka to enjoy the transient beauty of the *sakura* (cherry blossoms) in early spring. Known today as Tokyo's Ueno Park, the area continues to draw crowds as a destination for *hanami*, or "flower viewing." During *hanami*, people hung fabric or kimono from the trees to create temporary enclosures so that they could picnic in private beneath the blossoms. In this print, a young samurai by the name of Gyokuensai stands beneath a cherry tree on a blustery night. The breeze flips the edge of the hanging kimono to reveal an ornate lacquered picnic box, but the man appears to be alone. As pale petals swirl in the dim light of the crescent moon, they allude both to the fleeting nature of the blossoms and the life of the samurai.

Date: 1889
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

In this print, Yoshitoshi tells the tragic tale of Ochiyo, a servant woman in a noble household who fell deeply in love. When she received news of her lover's death, she went mad. She walked around the city rereading his love letters until they turned to tatters. Eventually, she died of grief. In Yoshitoshi's imagining of the tale, the crescent moon peeks just above a cloud, casting a faint, eerie light on Kyoto's Gojo Bridge. Ochiyo's long hair hangs loose and unkempt, her kimono disheveled, and her feet bare as she stands alone on a ghostly bridge. Her expression is blank, possessed by grief, while the long, fraying letters writhe through the air.





The Moon in Rain: Kojima Takanori

Date: 1889
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi, Yamamoto to (carver)

Kojima Takanori was a 14th-century nobleman who assisted Emperor Go-Daigo in his revolt against the ruling Hojo family. Following the failure of their first attempt, the emperor was exiled. Though Takanori tried to intercept the emperor, he could not. Determined, he disguised himself as a peasant with a straw raincoat and hat and went to the inn where Emperor Go-Daigo had stopped for the night. He could not lay eyes on the emperor from outside, but Takanori managed to sneak into the back garden. There he peeled some bark from a cherry tree and wrote an encouraging message in the form of a Chinese poem. The next morning, the emperor saw the poem and drew strength from Takanori's message of encouragement. Yoshitoshi depicts the loyal soldier beneath the budding cherry tree, praying for the emperor in the falling rain.

Dawn Moon and Tumbling Snow:
Kobayashi Heihachiro

Date: 1889
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Go Kaisai, Yoshihisa to (carver)

In this print Yoshitoshi illustrates a scene from the final act of the kabuki drama *Kanadehon Chushingura*. After eighteen months of careful planning, the revenge plot of the 47 *ronin* (samurai without a master) culminates in a night attack on the mansion of Moronao, the man responsible for their master's death. As Moronao's followers dutifully protect him, the mansion's snow-covered garden becomes a bloody battlefield. Yoshitoshi chooses to depict Kobayashi Heihachiro, a retainer of the villain Moronao, rather than one of the *ronin*. In the play, Kobayashi valiantly defends the entrance to Moronao's room until the young *ronin* Rikiya defeats him in a spectacular fight beside a frozen pond. Kobayashi knows his death is imminent, yet he fights with loyalty and unwavering courage.





The Moon of the Filial Son: Ono no Takamura

Date: 1889
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso

Zeng Shen, an important disciple of Confucius, is often credited with compiling the list of the *Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety*. Among these tales of devoted children, he included his own story. One day, while he was gathering firewood in the hills, he felt a strange urge to return home at once. When he arrived, he found that his elderly mother required his presence and had bitten her finger in frustration at not being able to call him. Telepathically, her need had been communicated to her dutiful son. Yoshitoshi depicts the loyal Zeng Shen gathering wood, head lifted from his task as he feels his mother's call. In the distance, his home is nestled into the landscape beneath the moonlight.

The Moon at the Red Cliffs

Date: 1889

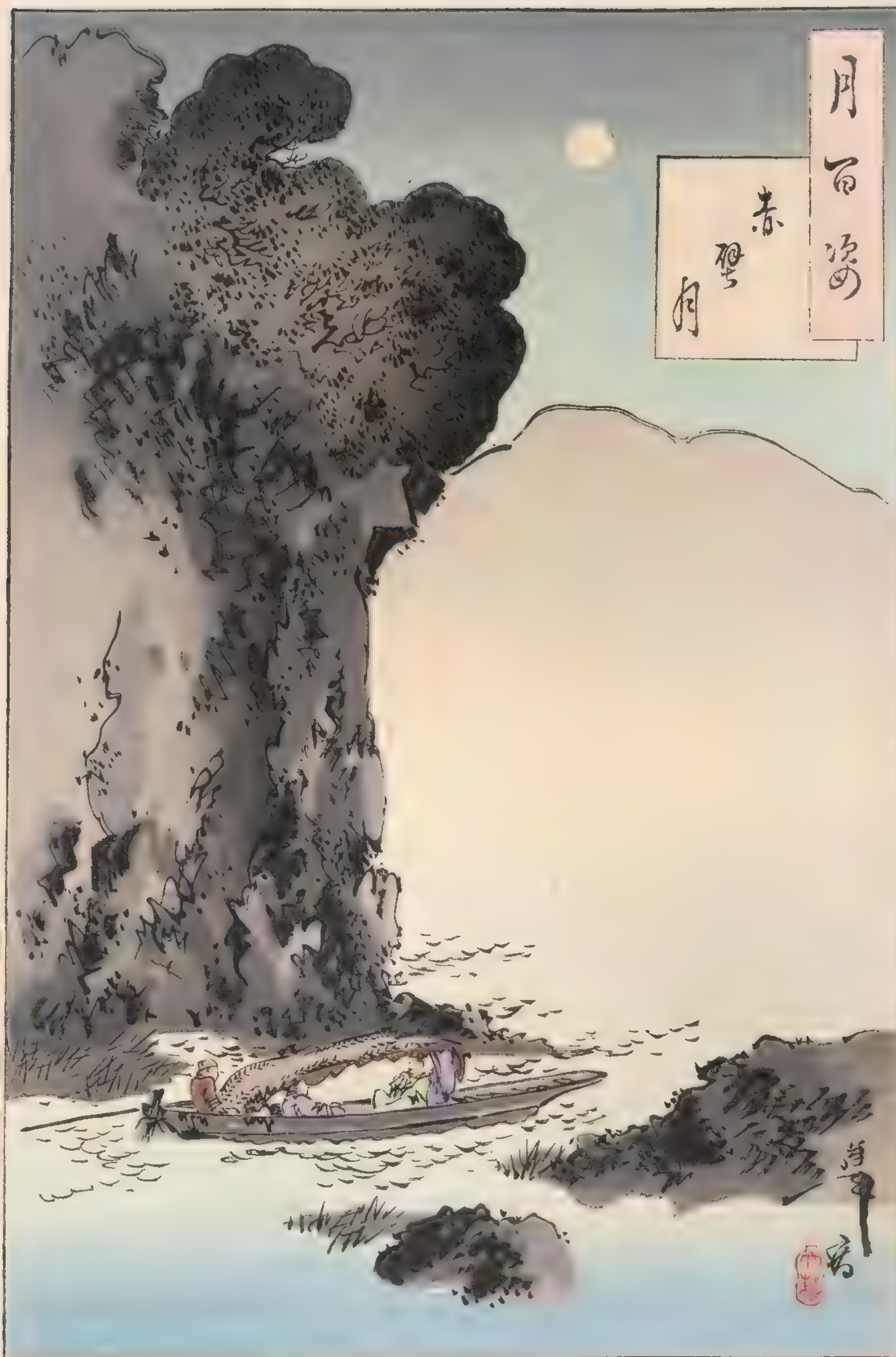
Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi sha

Seals: Taiso

Su Dongpo, also known as Su Shi, was a member of the Chinese literati during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). These cultured court officials distinguished themselves with their amateur talent in poetry, painting, and calligraphy. While Su Dongpo excelled in all three fields, in this print Yoshitoshi depicts Su Dongpo's famous pair of poems "First and Second Odes on the Red Cliffs." The story of the Red Cliffs was a popular artistic subject among the literati. In 1082, Su Dongpo and his friends set out on the Yangtze River to view the Red Cliffs. Here, centuries before, the ancient warrior Cao Cao faced defeat in a legendary battle. Yoshitoshi depicts Cao Cao just moments before his downfall earlier in this series (p. 10). Su Dongpo's poems consider the poignant sense of beauty and loss stirred by memories of heroes long dead and the moonlit river. By the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the poet's visit to the cliffs became a popular subject in its own right. Yoshitoshi evokes this subject's legacy through his painterly brush strokes in the cliffs and rocks, ample use of negative space, and focus on landscape rather than figures.





A Poem by Uesugi Kenshin

Date: 1890
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

Uesugi no Terutora was a powerful 16th-century lord from Echigo province. Following his father's death, the 13-year-old Terutora usurped his weak older brother in order to protect his family during this era of civil war. At the age of 22, Terutora took priestly vows—a common practice for feudal lords at this time—and adopted the name Kenshin. Over the following years, he led his family in many great military campaigns, declaring war on powerful adversaries. He even dared to attack Oda Nobunaga, the most powerful man in Japan at the time, but died of illness before the campaign concluded. In this print, Kenshin wears his full armor with a priest's headdress in place of a helmet. Seated on a deerskin in his battle camp, he watches geese fly into the distance and composes a poem: "Frost fills the camp and the autumn air is still/ lines of returning geese cross the moon of the third hour."

Akashi Gidayu

Date: 1890

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Akashi Gidayu served as a general for Akechi Mitsuhide in the 16th century. Following the complete defeat of his lord's forces, Gidayu offered to commit *seppuku*, an honorable death by suicide, to pay for his failure. Though Mitsuhide refused, Gidayu was so overcome by shame that he disobeyed his lord's command and killed himself. Yoshitoshi presents Gidayu in his final moments. His death poem sits before him, his knife unsheathed. His hair is disheveled and the tiger painted on the screen glares reproachfully at Gidayu, its yellow eyes glowing in lamplight as the warrior wallows in his shame. He feels that even the moon in the sky is mocking his despair as he writes: "As I am about to enter the ranks of those who disobey/ ever more brightly shines/ the moon of the summer night." Once again, Yoshitoshi portrays the emotional struggle of the individual rather than the violent act that soon follows.





Cloth-Beating Moon: Yugiri

Date: 1890

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Enkatsu to (carver)

In the noh play Kinuta (*Cloth Beating*), a man who has been away from Kyoto for three years sends his maid, Yugiri, back home to tell his wife that he will soon return. Yugiri arrives in Kyoto and tries to comfort the lonely wife. The two hear the sound of cloth being beaten in order to make it soft, a sound that recalls a famous poem about a wife missing her husband. In an effort to comfort the lady of the house, Yugiri begins to beat cloth with a wooden mallet. Despite her rank, the wife takes over this task and wonders whether the autumn wind will carry the mournful sound to her distant husband. In Yoshitoshi's imagining of this scene, the two women are disconnected; the lady of the house is completely absorbed in her task, consumed with her grief, while Yugiri sits respectfully behind her.

Moon of the Lonely House

Date: 1890

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

Known alternatively as the story of the *Lonely House on Adachi Moor* or *Kurozuka* (Black Mound), this tale of a murderous old woman has captured the imagination of artists and audiences since the late Nara Period (710-794). While the story centers on a woman in the service of an aristocratic household, the tale branches into distinct versions of her horrific deeds. Many of these stories revolve around illness in her master's family and the murder of a pregnant woman to secure her liver or the blood of the infant as medicine. In others, she takes in travelers for the night, which she robs and kills. Throughout each telling, the old woman remains a haunting presence. In this print, Yoshitoshi focuses on the height of tension just before her crime rather than the culmination of violence. The old woman lunges forward on the veranda, thrusting a small torch into the dilapidated house. The moonlight accentuates each shadow in her withered form. As her brows furrow—her eyes locked on something beyond the image—Yoshitoshi captures her terrifying determination in his portrait of the villain.

明治廿二年八月 日印刷 日本分館東京三目九番子
年八月 日出版 印刷發行所 秋山武石工門





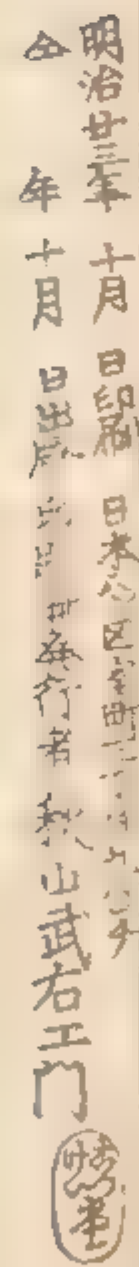
Taira no Tadanori

Date: 1890
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi, Esen to (carver)

One night, the 12th-century poet and military leader Taira no Tadanori went to pay a moonlit visit to his mistress, Kiku no Mae. As he glanced into the room, he was disappointed to find that she had a guest. After waiting many hours for the guest to leave, he began to fan himself impatiently as he paced back and forth outside the house. Lady Kiku heard his frustrated fanning and recited a famous poem by the Horikawa no Yorimune: "How noisy; the sound of insects calling in the meadow/ as for me, I make no sound but think of love." Upon hearing her poem, Tadanori knew she could hear him outside, but could not send her guest away. Frustrated, Tadanori returned home. In this print, a well-dressed Tadanori tries to peek into the softly illuminated room through the blinds. He leans forward listening for some recognition of his presence by his mistress. His stance expresses his impatience as he anxiously fans himself.

Date: 1890
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi

Sakata Kintoki, known as Kintaro (Golden Boy) as a child, was a famous Japanese folk hero. After the boy's father abandoned him in Ashigara Mountains, Yamauba, the "Mountain Woman," raised Kintoki within the forest. Recognized by his bright red skin and incredible strength, the boy would grow up to defeat the Shuten-doji at Mount Oe before becoming a loyal retainer of Minamoto no Yoritomo. In this print, Yoshitoshi depicts a scene from Kintoki's boyhood. Crouched in concentration, he officiates a wrestling match between a hare and a monkey on a moonlit night. A persimmon branch rests between Kintoki and his animal playmates, perhaps an allusion to the mischievous monkey who stole the fruits of immortality.





A Summer Evening

Date: 1890

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Yamamoto to (carver)

In this quiet scene of country life, Yoshitoshi depicts a peasant couple relaxing with their baby, only just visible in his mother's arms. The family sits on a straw mat under a trellis overgrown with vines of the night-blooming *hechima*, also known as "moonflowers." After a day of hard work, they enjoy the evening and sip sake that has been warmed in a teapot. The inscribed poem describes their pleasure in the cool evening, the flowers, and the beautiful moon overhead. It reads: "pleasure is this/ to lie cool under the moonflower bower/ the man in his undershirt, the woman in her slip." Yoshitoshi presents this informal, anonymous scene with great sensitivity. The sagging shoulder of the woman's top suggests that she is nursing her child, while the man reclines in the evening breeze.

Moon at Horin Temple: Yokobue

Date: 1890

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso

During the 12th century, Yokobue, a lady-in-waiting of Empress Kenreimon-in, fell in love with a young noble named Tokiyori. When his father forbade their union, Tokiyori could neither bring himself to disobey his father nor to marry another woman so, at the age of nineteen, he became a monk at Horin Temple. Yokobue journeyed to the mountain temple, hoping to change his mind. Though Tokiyori heard her sobs, he refused to see her, afraid that he would lose his determination upon the sight of her. Turned away by her true love, Yokobue became a nun herself. In this print, Yoshitoshi depicts a portrait of devastation. A rejected Yokobue leaves the temple, hands clasped as she wipes her unrelenting tears with her arm. In the distance, two intertwined trees symbolize two lovers, but fade into the mist along with Yokobue's hope for happiness.





Kazan Temple Moon

Date: 1890
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi no in, Yamamoto to (carver)

In this design, Yoshitoshi portrays Emperor Kazan, the sixty-fifth emperor of Japan who ruled from 985 to 987. While the emperor was distressed over the death of his beloved consort, a scheming member of the court, Fujiwara no Kaneie, hatched a plan to dispose of the ruler. He sent his son Michikane to convince the Emperor Kazan that joining the priesthood would salve his grief. The two men planned to take the vow of priesthood together at Gangyo Temple, yet at the last moment Michikane feigned the need to return to Kyoto one last time. Emperor Kazan took the vow alone, thus abdicating the throne at age 19. Michikane never returned. Gangyo Temple has since been renamed Kazan Temple in honor of the emperor. Yoshitoshi depicts the young emperor on his evening journey to the temple, accompanied by only one retainer. Emperor Kazan wears his courtly hat and a luxurious robe as he stands beside a cryptomeria tree, a royal symbol. His downturned eyes convey his overwhelming sense of loss, while the minimal background accentuates his sense of loneliness.

The Moon on Musashi Plain

Date: 1892

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Yoshitoshi, Yamamoto to (carver)

The former Musashi Plain now belongs to a suburb of Tokyo, but centuries ago the area was known for its views of the moon and magical foxes. These animals play a special role in Japanese folklore. They are loyal messengers of the Shinto deity Inari, but also sly tricksters that enjoy playing practical jokes on hapless humans. They can assume human form, often transforming into beautiful women. In this design, a fox admires its reflection in the water, perhaps in preparation to transform itself into one such beauty. As shadows roll across the plain and heavy fog settles on the bank, the fox's moonlit reflection hovers on the water in light grey.

明治廿四年一月一日印刷
 明治廿九年四月一日出版
 日本橋區本町二丁目九番
 印刷所金行春秋山武右衛門
 仙洲





Moon at Sarugaku

Date: 1892
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Taiso, Enkatsu to (carver)

In 10th-century Japan, *sarugaku* was a comic performance filled with song and dance. By the 15th century, the art form had developed into *noh*, with its comedic interludes called *kyogen*. In this design, Yoshitoshi appears to show people on their way to such a *noh* performance. High-ranking persons, such as the gentleman in the foreground, could watch the show from a raised veranda, while lower-ranking people, such as the men in the background, had to watch from the ground. Yoshitoshi depicts the latter group in near caricature with umbrellas shouldered in case of rain. With his lavish outfit, static pose, and quiet composure, the figure in the foreground evokes the character of *noh* theater, while the active bodies and animated faces of the commoners mirror the informality of *kyogen*.

明治三十四年一月十五日
金五十四年四月 日
武右王門

A Buddhist Monk Receives Cassia Seeds on a Moonlit Night

Date: 1891
 Medium: Woodblock print
 Size: 14.5" x 10"
 Signature: Yoshitoshi
 Seals: Taiso, Yamamoto to (carver)

According to legend, eight *katsura*, or cassia tress, grow on the moon. While their leaves lend the autumn moon its color, their seeds are imbued with the gifts of immortality and invisibility. In this print, a Buddhist monk holds up his begging bowl to catch these magical seeds as they fall from the night sky. The figure's facial features, earrings, and distinctive clothing indicate that he is an *arhat* (in Japanese, *rakan*), a disciple of Buddha who has achieved enlightenment. These Buddhist saints are popular subjects in both Chinese and Japanese art. Though the glowing circle behind the figure appears to be the moon at first glance, it is in fact the *Arhat's* glowing halo.





A Poem by Mizuki Tatsunosuke

Date: 1891
 Medium: Woodblock print
 Size: 14.5" x 10"
 Signature: Yoshitoshi
 Seals: Taiso, Chokuzan to (carver)

After 1629, women were banned from the kabuki stage and all female roles were played by *onnagata*, male actors who specialized in female roles. These actors practiced feminine mannerisms and dress both onstage and off, setting fashion trends and stunning all with their grace. Mizuki Tatsunosuke was a famous *onnagata* of the late 17th century. At Yoshitoshi's hand, the elegant actor strolls beneath the blossoming cherry trees awash with moonlight. As *onnagata* were ordered to shave off their forelocks, the actor wears a purple scarf to hide his bare patch. An open fan balanced in one hand and a poem card in the other, Tatsunosuke looks over his shoulder at the low hanging moon. The poem reads: "Cherry trees blossom by the Sumida River/ boats fade from view in the gathering dusk/ at Sekiya as I view the moon."

The Moon's Invention: Hozo Temple

Date: 1891

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Kai, Yoshihisa to (carver)

Hozoin Kakuzenbo In'ei was a 16th-century Buddhist monk who founded a school of fencing at Hozo Temple in Nara. Originally a member of the noble Nakamikado family, In'ei's descendants carried on the martial tradition of their ancestors well into the 19th century. In this print, Yoshitoshi imagines the creation of the monk's most famous invention: the crescent-shaped *kamayari*, or "cross spear." As he gazes into the placid water of Sarusawa Pond, he finds inspiration reflected back to him. The crescent moon perches upon his spear resembling the form this popular weapon. Yoshitoshi renders the monk with a kind face but leaves no question about his strength with his powerful posture and solid form.

明治四年六月 日印刷 日本橋區本町三丁目九番地
全 年 全 月 日出版 印刷無發行 秋山武右衛門





Chofu Village Moon

Date: 1891
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi

In this peaceful rural scene from Musashi Province, two figures beat cloth on the bank of the Chofu River, one of Japan's six "jewel rivers." To prepare the fabric for use, the freshly woven fabric would be washed in the river then pounded with wooden mallets until soft and lustrous, and then laid out to dry on the riverbank. Typically, scenes of this river present beautiful young women washing, bleaching, or pounding cloth. This association derives from poetic allusion rather than historical accuracy. Over the centuries, the word Chofu became a *makura-kotoba*, a poetic term that immediately evoked a particular scene—in this case, lithe beauties preparing cloth on the riverbank. Though Yoshitoshi's figures work with cloth, the scene deviates from the expected image. In place of nymph-like beauties, a pair of humble workers soften cloth by moonlight.

The Moon at Obasute-yama

Date: 1891

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso

Located in the city of Chikuma in Nagano Prefecture, Mount Kamuriki is widely known as Mount Obasute. The term *obasute* means "abandoning an old woman," a folkloric practice of abandoning the elderly in the woods to die when they became too much of a burden. Thought to have originated from Indian Buddhist mythology, legends of this practice can be found through Japanese folklore, literature, and theater. In Yoshitoshi's interpretation of this grim practice, an old woman clings to the back of a young man, feet bare as they walk to her death. A gnarled old pine tree and the half-hidden moon cast a melancholy atmosphere over the scene. The figures appear distant, expressionless, and secondary to the ancient pine that cuts through the composition.

明治廿四年六月
年十月 日 出版 印刷 發行 者 秋山武右衛門
日本三益堂西下百九十五号





The Moon's Four Strings: Semimaru

Date: 1891
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Yoshitoshi, Yoshihisa to (carver)

Semimaru was a blind poet and musician of the 10th century who was banished to a small cottage between Kyoto and Lake Biwa. Though his life story has several versions—in some he's a courtier, in others a prince—Yoshitoshi does not indicate a particular telling of Semimaru's life in this print. Instead, Yoshitoshi offers a portrait of a musician absorbed in his art. Semimaru strums his *biwa* (lute) with a plectrum, head cocked in concentration. The moonlight reveals his thinning hair and the dilapidated state of his cottage, but these things do not concern him. As the pampas grass rustles beyond the veranda, he is lost in his song. Another reference to Semimaru can be found in the print *Suzaku Gate Moon: Hakuga Sanmi* (p. 27), where his musical pupil Minamoto no Hiromasa plays the flute by moonlight.

The Moon at Saga

Date: 1891

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.5" x 10"

Signature: Yoshitoshi

Seals: Taiso, Chokuzan to (carver)

The beautiful musician Kogo no Tsubone was a favorite of the 12th-century emperor, Go-Shirakawa. Fierce with jealousy, Empress Kenreimon-in sought advice from her father, Taira no Kiyomori, who ordered the musician to be poisoned. Upon learning of this plan, Lady Tsubone fled the court. Devastated, the emperor sent his courtier Minamoto no Nakakuni, another musician, to find Lady Tsubone and return her to Kyoto. One night, Nakakuni heard familiar *koto* music emerging from a small house in Saga. He responded by playing a tune on his flute and convinced his fellow musician to return to court. In this print, Yoshitoshi depicts the musicians' call and response. Nakakuni has dismounted his horse to play his flute, while Lady Tsubone can be seen within the house, gracefully bent over her *koto*.





A Wandering Poet

Date: 1891
Medium: Woodblock print
Size: 14.5" x 10"
Signature: Yoshitoshi
Seals: Issho, Yamamoto to (carver)

During the Edo period (1603-1861), *haiku* poets often travelled the country in search of inspiration. In this print, Yoshitoshi depicts the famous poet Matsuo Basho. Born into a samurai family in 1644, Basho left home at the age of 22 to live on a riverbank in Edo and focus on his poetry. Basho traveled throughout Japan, drawing inspiration from its people, customs, and history. Meeting strangers along the road was one of the great pleasures of travel. Here, the traveling poet has come upon a group of farmers enjoying *tsukimi*, or "moon viewing." Seated beside a table decorated with seasonal flowers, they invite the poet to join them for tea and cakes as they enjoy the full moon. When asked to compose a poem for them, he recites: "Since the crescent moon I have been waiting for tonight."



Contents Page

Date: 1892

Medium: Woodblock print

Size: 14.25" x 19.5"

Signature: Sogaku sho (calligrapher)

Seals: Sogaku

The publisher Akiyama Buemon (Kokkeido) released Yoshitoshi's *One Hundred Views of the Moon* as individual designs between 1885 and 1892. Following Yoshitoshi's death on June 11th, 1892, Akiyama was quick to publish the full series as a set with a title page, memorial portrait, preface, and contents page. Just six days later, he ran an ad in the *Yomiuri Shinbun* stating that "the master Yoshitoshi has regrettably passed on, but now an edition assembling the entire set is complete."¹ Designed by the calligrapher Sogaku, the contents page to *One Hundred Views of the Moon* depicts the titles in decorative cartouches atop a pale grey botanical pattern. While this two-page diptych was released after Yoshitoshi's death, the date seal on the margin of the contents page reads May 1892. This date confirms that Yoshitoshi and Akiyama began work on the complete album before the artist's death.

1. Amy Reigle Newland, "The great authority of ukiyo-e masters': the making of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's public persona" from *Yoshitoshi: Masterpieces from the Ed Freis Collection* (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2011), 35.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the following people for their contributions to this catalog. Firstly, thank you to Roni Neuer for your incredible work overseeing every aspect of its production—without your passion none of this would be possible. Thank you to Madison Folks for your excellent scholarly research and writing. Your dedication has brought this collection to life in your prose. A thank you to Travis Suzaka for your inexhaustible work in catalog design—I am constantly amazed by your creativity. Lastly, I am deeply grateful to Valentina Vidusin for her masterful photography, color correction, and assistance throughout.

David Libertson
President

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